



ethos

CONTENTS

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WILDFLOWERS: Janet Romyko	1
THE FUNCTION OF ISHMAEL IN MOBY DICK: Patricia Farren	2
YOUR COOL: Barbara Ridge	6
THE G-MEN: Frances Panaraukas	7
THE CAT: Kathleen Rogers	8
THREE CHEERS: Sister Mary David, S.N.D.	9
THE UNSTRUNG MINSTREL: Deborah Field	10
FROM MY SUNDAY WINDOW: Claire Kearney	15
DEAF TED, DANOOTA & ME (& OUR FRIEND MALCOLM & OUR FAITHFUL FROG BESIDEUS) FIGHT THE GRORKS: Eileen Gunn	17
"I SING NEW ENGLAND . . .": Christine Aiken	19
DAY OF THE SALEM HANGINGS: Jane O'Connell	20
LOCAL COLOR: Kathleen Rogers	21
TO ANNE BRADSTREET: Elaine Carroll	22
Illustrations by Sister Mary of St. Philip, F.M.M.	
CROSS-COUNTRY RACE AT CONCORD: Mary Luti	24
I, THE AMERICAN: Janice Walsh	26
TENEMENT: Christine Aiken	27
COMMON-TARY: Photography by Rita Babraitis	28
WALLACE STEVENS: A VIEW FROM WITHIN: Elaine Carroll	29
HOME: Mary Moss	36
ACCESS: Sister Mary David, S.N.D.	38
THE 365TH DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE MAN OF THE OAR: Maureen Crighton	39
SAND: Sallyann Giacosanizio	45
SYNAPSE: Barbara Deck	46
DREAM: Patricia Maher	49
COVER DESIGN: Regina Preziosi	

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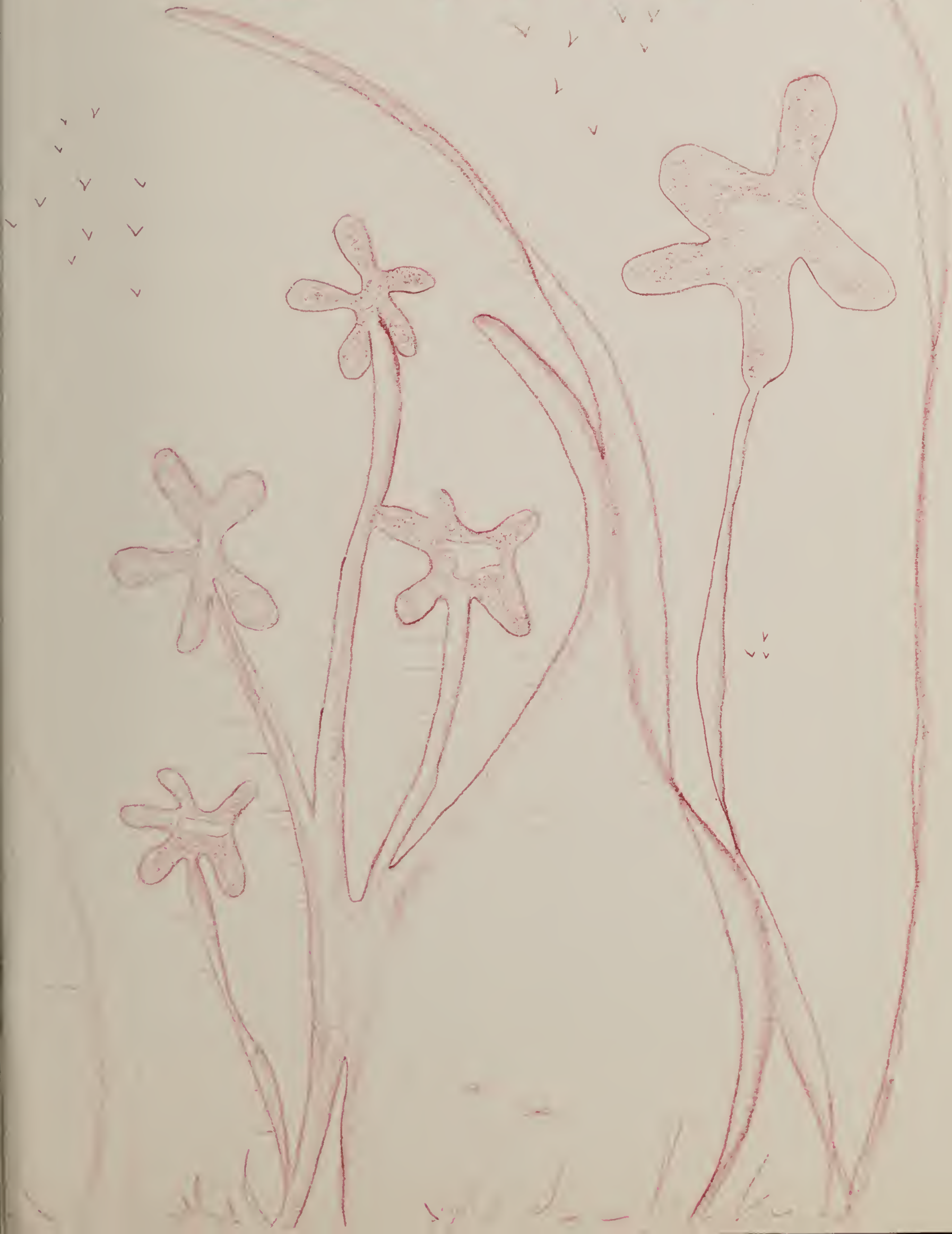
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The Function of Ishmael in Moby Dick

PATRICIA FARREN, '68

"We ourselves see in all rivers and oceans . . . the image of the ungraspable phantom of life, and this is the key to it all."

The key to Melville's *Moby Dick* is the inability of mortal man to master his own subconscious and thereby realize the freedom of integrity. Ishmael's narration, then, recounts the attempt of the remarkable Captain Ahab to assert a "mortally intolerable" independence.

The Ishmael who is presented in the book's first episodes is marked by certain enthusiasms and prejudices which would question his authority as a narrator. His naive presumption to seek the "ungraspable phantom" would tend to devalue Ahab's important subjectivism had not Ishmael soon appreciated his own social and cosmic limita-

tions. Ishmael's development as a character defines the limits of mortally attainable freedom and thus serves as a standard of comparison in the evaluation of Ahab's enormous intentions. Having survived and understood his own identity crisis — for the very reason that his solution is a mortal attainment — Ishmael is in a position to describe with significance the experience of Ahab.

Of course, no value judgment is involved in the measuring of Ahab's quest: Ishmael relates his captain's defeat in human terms — the only available vocabulary. Yet Ishmael does not fail to suggest that the ultimate triumph of apotheosis is inherent in Ahab's "ocean-perishing." His eulogy to Ahab is expressed in his memorial to the "water gazer" Bulkington, whose soul shared Ahab's "intrepid effort to keep the open independence of her sea," while "the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore; for in landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God." Ishmael's "six-inch chapter," then, summarizes the difficult paradox: the highest truth is mortally intolerable. It is only through Ishmael's growth as a character that he can learn this lesson about narcissism, and narrate such a conclusion authoritatively.

Melville, of course, supplies a practical format for his analysis of human capabilities

Moby Dick is far more than a case study or psychological tract. The structure within which Ahab and Ishmael experiment is essentially the two-fold Puritan ethic, as expounded in Father Mapple's sermon. The basic alternatives suggested in the minister's lesson are the Calvinistic doctrine of salvation through self-denial and the conscious agency of the "inexorable self." Isolated in the microcosm of a whaling vessel, the characters may test the implications of each strand of the Puritan ethic where the conventions of stable land neither apply nor can disguise the ambiguity of the dual system. The openness of the sea urges each sailor to determine the real character of his identity.

The sea, then, is the obvious site for the drama of self-discovery. As Ishmael suggests through several images, the land, "kindest to our mortalities," is unsuited to the meditation which yields the highest truth. The degree of each character's rejection of land-values determines his access to this "ungraspable phantom."

Yet the choice of a whaler as the setting of an analysis of man's capabilities serves a more important function: the arch-whale Moby Dick is a prop through whose use Melville can concretely express Ahab's aspirations. Since Ahab's attempt to master his subconscious is not merely the traditional *hybris* which pretends to human knowledge, Melville's use of the whale is necessarily more sophisticated and profound than simple "forbidden fruit" imagery. What Ahab seeks is the freedom possible only through complete self-mastery. Yet some portion of his being eludes his command, a situation that so maddens Ahab that, paradoxically, only the destruction of that subconscious faculty will satisfy his desire for independent self-completeness:

That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate . . . In each event, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask.

This inarticulate evil Ahab comes to identify with the White Whale. He projects his own unconscious self onto the whale; he would assault and destroy it, and thereby destroy himself, as all water-gazers must. This projection is elaborately explicit:

Ahab at last came to identify with him (Moby Dick) not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations. The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some men feel eating in them . . . all the subtle demonisms of life and thought, all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified and made practically assailable in Moby Dick.

The Albino whale is not the "phantom," but Ahab's search for the "ungraspable phantom" becomes, by means of such subreption, a whale hunt; the voyage of the Pequod becomes man's journey to self-knowledge.

Ahab's quest is plainly an attempt to assert his "inexorable self." This egocentrism renders him a ruthless individual, as his desire for complete self-mastery necessarily belittles or negates the importance of others. He can thus sacrifice both the lives and good consciences of his crew, curse "mortal interindebtedness," and reject all offers of sociability, as he does in his harsh refusals to give aid to the Rachel's captain or sympathy to Pip. Ahab flees human contact — be it friendship or religion — because he fears the diminution of his independent self-completeness. His idea of a complete man he describes to the carpenter — the "man-maker" who supplies his new leg:

. . . no heart at all, brass forehead, and about a quarter of an acre of fine brains — shall I order eyes to see outwards? No, but put a sky-light on top of his head to illuminate inwards.

Although the possibility of such complete introspection is contradicted by experience, Ahab sees this radical individuality as the only position consistent with self-mastery. Indeed, he will recognize no confines to his will:

The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run — What I've dared, I've willed, and what I've willed, I'll do!

When Ahab later realizes the implications of his quest, that he is "both chasing and being chased to his deadly end," the revelation initially leaves him sadder, but unshaken. However, as the Pequod nears the line, he virtually admits that it is Fate and not free will which motivates him, which forces him to do "what (he) durst not so much as dare." This is a humiliating subjection, since it deprives him of his cherished individuality and

rests on the false premise that the whale is the projection of his own unconscious self

Ahab wanted to master more than self — he wanted to master Nature which is a symbol of the spirit

hope for self-mastery. More and more, as the climax of his life approaches, Ahab falls back on the idea of external Fate, rather than the idea of personal will to explain his obsessive quest which in turn becomes meaningless since its goal is already conceded.

That, briefly, is Ahab's story as revealed by his own words and actions. The significance and explanation of his apparent defeat are revealed by Ishmael's commentary — not especially on Ahab's career, but on his own development. The character Ishmael, in testing his ability to project his "inexorable self," encounters the same problem concerning individuality and independence as does Ahab, but he will withdraw from the whole-hearted quest for individuation in favor of the alternative of self-denial suggested by Father Mapple's sermon.

Initially, Ishmael adopts "Ahab's quenchless feud," driven by a "wild, mystical, sympathetic feeling." Like Ahab, he associates the "invisible spheres" hidden by the whale's whiteness with the antihuman forces of the world, notably, "nothingness" and death, the antitheses of mortal integrity. For Ishmael, then, as for Ahab, the whalehunt is a psychological quest for self-completeness — but with one important qualification: for Ahab, Moby Dick is the personification of the forces capable of delimiting human freedom, but, as Ishmael describes his own attitude, "of all these things, the Albino whale was the *symbol*." Ahab's desire to kill Moby Dick is self-destructive, since the whale is the projection of his own limitations; Ishmael's "fiery hunt," at this point, seems the surer expression of freedom, since he is striking out at an external phenomenon to maintain his identity.

This attitude, however, is not Ishmael's ultimate position: he himself mentions that the evil symbolized by whiteness is only what Moby Dick "seemed (to him) at times." Ishmael elsewhere records an alternative point of view — a "genial, desperado philosophy," in which danger and death itself are but jokes. He "goes for a cool, collected dive at death and destruction" — certainly a departure from his previous oath against the forces contrary to his self-completeness!

A compromise between such conflicting attitudes is later reached by Ishmael, who records his hope of finding "an insular Tahiti" amidst the cannibalism of his half-known subconscious ocean. This solution rejects Ahab's complete subjectivism, yet is not an option for indifference. Rather, Ishmael maintains his landless spirit, but qualifies his hope of self-mastery by recognizing the need of some stability or self-limitation. This settlement is actually Ishmael's application of an aforelearned lesson: on his first mast-head watch, he had recognized the implications of phantom-seeking — that, like Narcissus, the Pantheist loses his identity as it becomes diffused in the mystic ocean.

Ishmael claims that his compromise offers a point of balance at which "fact and fancy" meet. He pictures the beginning and end of man's circular voyage as a spot between belief and disbelief — "man's pondering repose of If." Such a position is inherently unstable, but Ishmael repeats that in this life we can never find the "father" — the source of absolute ("mortally intolerable") truth. As he describes his new attitude:

Doubts of all things earthly, and intuitions of some things heavenly; this combination makes neither believer nor infidel, but makes a man who regards both with equal eye.

This new-found duality is symbolized by Ishmael's discovery of tranquility among the grand Armada of whales, which demonstrates to him the possibility of an "insular Tahiti" within an "appalling ocean" — an image repeated by his rescue from the vortex of the Pequod's disaster. What is perhaps more important in the Armada scene is Ishmael's ability to assign benignity and creativity to the whales — a refutation of Ahab's hatred of the "inscrutable thing" he sees in Moby Dick, as well as a qualification of his own determination to eradicate the evil represented to him by the whale. This development too, is repeated in the rescue scene, where a coffin becomes Ishmael's life buoy.

The repetition of the "insular Tahiti" theme up to the very last paragraph of the book definitely establishes Ishmael's compromise between complete subjectivism and indifferent bravado as his final attitude toward phantom-seeking. Ishmael determines

to salvage what individuality his concessions to reality will permit. This conclusion was necessarily conditioned by the lessons he learned concerning free will, evil and sociability, and can therefore authoritatively comment upon Ahab's attitude toward each.

A realistic appreciation of the duality of good and evil is suggested by Ishmael's withdrawal of complete commitment to phantom-seeking. His ability to concede benignity to the whales is a sample of this realism. Ishmael recounts the stages which led to such an attitude. Like Ahab, his initial role is that of an "infidel" — he has no faith in the benign aspect of whiteness, and sees a universe without value. Under the spell of the try-works' fire, he even falls into a visionary state where the world seems hellish, rather than good. This state of spiritual death — the loss of identity — is symbolized by the proximity of physical death when Ishmael's inattention nearly causes the ship to capsize. Ishmael saves himself by reasserting his belief in the natural sun, the principles of life. His subsequent warnings against abandoning the compass and against accepting the counsels of fire cannot but apply to Ahab, whose rejection of scientific instruments to guide his ship, and whose fire worship, lead to this very loss of identity.

Yet Ishmael himself has not completely rejected Ahabian subjectivism at this point: the light of the sun shows him darkness and death in nature as well as life. Such considerations — the "woe that is madness" — would undoubtedly have led him back to an inverting, deadening fire worship, had he not formulated the compromise which closely parallels his conclusion regarding the whale hunt: "like the Catskill eagle, he rises into sunlight and sinks into darkness; but even his dark moods are contained by an inclusive faith, as the eagle in the dark gorge is still far above the plain."

Ishmael's account of his measuring the Arsicadian whale skeleton contains his final assertion of nature's duality. His imagery is vital and alive, but within the context of death, for he describes a luxurious growth of flowers and tendril woven among a whale's bones. This is a curious reconciliation of life

and death, good and evil in nature. Ishmael cannot even determine definitely if the nature of reality is life or death, but he nonetheless acknowledges their peaceful coexistence.

This passage's allusion to a "weaver god," and certainly Ishmael's final attitude toward the phantom hunt also presuppose a well-developed attitude on the part of Ishmael concerning man's freedom. Since one's ability to master his entire identity is the key to this story, such a lesson is all-important. The naïve Ishmael of the book's prologue, having been "deluded by Fate," assumes that his whaling career "was a choice resulting from (his) own unbiased free will and discriminating judgment." However, the monotony of mat-making later induces a state of reverie, in which Ishmael imagines that "chance, free will, and necessity — no wise incompatible — all interweavingly work together." This attitude still assigns a great deal of influence to free will, while "chance has the last featuring blow at events." Yet this definition is the product of a daydream, and is not Ishmael's last word on the subject. Significantly, the "ball of free will" falls from his hand when his reverie is interrupted.

Still later, tied to Queequeg's danger by the monkey-rope, Ishmael comes to recognize a limitation on his free will — the realization which paves the way for his acceptance of a deaf "weaver god" in the bower setting. This subjection to Fate underlies Ishmael's withdrawal from the quest for independent self-completeness, for to recognize cosmic or social limitations upon one's freedom is to relinquish any hope of victory.

It is significant that such stages in Ishmael's withdrawal from phantom-seeking are described in the imagery of creativity. If the highest truth is mortally intolerable, then the limitations to one's complete individuality are necessarily favorable to life and growth. So the self-limitation which Ishmael accepts is at least mortally satisfying, since the social commitment which this decision implies is a creative situation. Thus an early image in the book — the "offspring" of the marriage of Ishmael and Queequeg — like many such

lessons, becomes important in the light of Ishmael's progression as a character. His affectionate feeling for his fellow man, as expressed in his language of creativity while he squeezes sperm, his friendship with Queequeg, and even his rescue by means of Queequeg's coffin concurrently express limitations of man's individuality and a positive alternative to the destructive implications of such individuality. If Ishmael's option for self-denial does not conform to the standards of Father Mapple's Christian institution, it can perhaps be explained by its landless context, and justified by its charitable spirit in the true Christian sense.

At any rate, Ishmael's attitude helps him avoid the tragedy of Ahab, who refuses to admit any such limitations, until he is made to realize that his very quest for self-mastery

is no longer self-willed, that the reality he seeks is forever unattainable, that his supposedly creative or at least protective instinct is, rather, self-destructive. Moby Dick, as the projected replica of Ahab's unknown and hunted face, will forever elude him, yet Ahab is trapped in the vicious circle of being driven to seek what is unattainable for the very reason that he is being driven. The resultant frustration, or what Jung calls a *sentiment d'incomplétude*, in turn keeps Ahab involved in this aimless and self-destructive quest.

Ishmael's workable solution to the problem of individuation, namely, mortal creativity and survival through accepting self-limitation, thus functions to render Ahab's "inexorable self" at least mortally sterile.

Your Cool

Don't sweat the small stuff

And if you are strong enough

The big stuff either.

Who cares?

Black print on white has a habit

Of saying tough things

Anyway.

Take life by the strings

It swings — when you stand aside

BARBARA RIDGE, '68

The G-Men

FRANCES PANARAUSKAS, '69

They arrived en masse. That was the way they always came—all together, all in weird assortments of rags and tatters, and totally famished. "I have not tell you about them," Frank, the boss, half-apologized in his heavy accent, "you see what they wants." The garbage men wanted ham and lots of eggs, sides of bacon, double-decker hamburgers, frosted mugs of root beer, pots of coffee, and attention.

Julio was the first one I approached. "May I get you something, sir?"

Julio looked back blankly.

"Sir, may I get you something?"

Still no response.

Why, I thought, couldn't I have found a nice receptionist job for the summer; or why didn't I work in a coal mine; or burn caterpillar cocoons for the government the way my best friend was doing? Instead, I was standing behind this counter at six o'clock every grim morning spilling gallons of coffee into plastic saucers. And the people wouldn't even speak to me! Once more I asked Julio if there was anything at all I could fetch for him.

Medina, the driver of the refuse truck and head man on the crew, intervened. "Que quieres?" he spouted at Julio. "Si, bacon, eggs, bread, root beer," Medina translated back to me.

Practically the whole army of sanitation workers refused to speak to me in the beginning. For over a week the debate raged

in two broken languages concerning who I was and what I was doing at the luncheonette. A tall Negro spokesman took the issue of *me* right to the top, that is, to Frank the boss.

"She ees a college girl," Frank puffed with pride.

Still no one spoke to me; rather, they observed the phenomenon of a live college student. At last the tall Negro came forward, one sleeve of his regulation Refuse Department shirt totally shattered and a white rag wound warrior-style about his head, to request a root beer and my name. I said I was Fran. He said he was Leonard.

Before the truck pulled out Julio ran up, laughing shyly, and told me in Anglo-Spanish that Leonard was known at the plant (euphemism for the dump) as Leemo and was a "beeg shoot" on the crew.

The "G-men" came two days a week and on alternating Wednesdays for can and tin collection. When they entered they did so with the aplomb of the mob on the original Bastille Day. First, the driver, a man of considerable status and influence on the particular crew, would brake his green mechanical monster to the curb and halt its gaping iron mouth which devoured newspaper morsels spiced with tidbits of tin. Then the "boys" released their dare-devil, one-hand grips on the top of the truck and vaulted to the pavement. Some of the "boys" were grandfathers, others had left school only a year

before. Many were Puerto Ricans, new to the States, and a very few were shaven college boys at summer work.

The eight o'clock crowd was ready for lunch and fun. They had already put in half a working day. They plugged quarters into the jukebox and, if their pockets were full, called for everything on the menu. If pay day wasn't until tomorrow they bickered over whose turn it was to pay.

"Hey, Frannie, didn't I pay yo' the last time we was heah? I knows I did. Huh, Frannie?"

I had been promoted from waitress to financial arbiter. No one ever said please, and only Medina, who apparently felt responsible for their public image, said thank you. No one ever demanded or rapped his fingers as a subtle hint to hurry, or said it was about time I had calculated the bill. They had no concept of time.

They were all big boys, mostly unshaven, some mammoth, all strong and conditioned to hundred-pound loads on their backs, playing with the prizes they had salvaged. Percy came the first day with shiny aluminum one-way sunglasses and never removed them all summer. Once Scotty arrived, a virtual skeleton of strength, in a shredded shirt minus long-lost buttons, one knee protruding through his pants, and on his feet, the polished wingtips someone had discarded. He looked like a shipwrecked Harvard man.

Scott was the philosopher-fool of the group. He had a plastic face that could

mimic the world, a child's love for the outside, and an infatuation with fun. For Independence Day he celebrated with salutes and sparklers right in the luncheonette; periodically he pleaded pneumonia to wrangle a day off from the foreman; and when his colleagues dumped him into a trash can, he laughed. His orations detailing his sundry exploits were interspersed with profundities.

"Sure you break your back but so do all the boys on the crew. And you're always outside. Frannie—it's good to be outside all the time."

Scott had no idea what grad school meant and was unimpressed when he heard. He liked working one day at a time with people he liked and carousing with them at night. He nutshelled their whole laughing philosophy the morning he toyed with a broken watch he had picked up somewhere along the route: "I don't need a watch. Not one guy in this department owns a watch. We make our own time."

The day I left, Medina proclaimed me "Sanitation Sweetheart" and all the boys signed a card for me; it had a glass dew drop upon a velvet rose. I think Scott may have signed for Julio. And when I told them to be careful and to be good, they wished me the best back at college. But they looked dubious. Leemo hinted that I might be better off making a career at the luncheonette with Frank, the boss. They felt sorry for me and, at that parting, I did too. I owned a watch.

The Cat

The numinous windowledge cat

rests whitely between the begonia plants

and approves of the street and the passers at dusk.

KATHLEEN ROGERS, '69



*Illustration by
Regina Preziosi, '67*

three cheers

for the man who invented stairs.

*How else could I stand
eye to eye with you, world
and look down on your
toothpick telephone poles?*

Here I am and ready.

*I can step crush that dainty fir,
bubble-blow your clouds*

I'm here the winner.

*Cheers for the man who invented stairs
and made me giant.*

SISTER MARY DAVID, S.N.D., '68

The Unstrung Minstrel

DEBORAH FIELD, '68

One of the strings of his lute had broken with a loud, painful snap. He had been playing it a good deal more than usual of late, it was true, but he would have, he suspected, an unpleasantly hard time of it finding a string to replace this one. And meanwhile the instrument was useless. Completely exasperated, he tossed it on the grass and flung himself down to lie beside it.

Green, said Gervais de Besancon (to himself), is new life, new love. There was fine irony, of which he was only slowly becoming aware, in the vast differences among shades. New love was the color of the grass which brushed his cheek. Cool and fresh, it still sparkled with early morning crystals. Clearly, it was an ideal shade. Across the brook, on the hill, it was subtler, less vivid, and the trees above his head and off to the right were paler still.

He had a refined disapproval of lushness, of a scene with a superabundance of beauty that made true appreciation of it impossible. Here, as far as he could see, there was nothing that was not perfectly balanced, and so, duly inspired, he composed a poem to moderation in nature. When he had thought of the precisely correct number of verses, he ended it and stared intently across the brook, curiously unsatisfied.

For the first time something in his picture moved. A girl walked into the field and destroyed the fine symmetry of the scene. Gervais sat up quickly, reaching instinctively for his voiceless lute. He paused briefly while he considered if she was worth crossing the

water for, and if so, how he was going to do it. The first problem was solved with little difficulty, since his way of life was dependent upon feminine company. And he had not really thought about the brook as an obstacle, for years of careful and detailed training assured him of his ability to clear the four foot watery expanse at one leap. He did not, however, have to resort to unnecessary heroics at the cost of artless grace; there were enough stones for him to walk across.

He could not be sure whether she had seen him or not. One could never be sure, especially in this semi-barbaric nation. In Provence, he would have assumed that she was pointedly ignoring him, playing her part in an endlessly acted pageant. But this girl might simply be uninterested.

As he approached her, he took quick stock of her — as well as he could with her back half turned to him. It was always wise to notice (aloud) a woman's good features immediately; it convinced her of the poet's sincerity, since it seemed evident that he had put time into the appraisal.

Well, he could not tell much about this one, other than that her russet-kirtled figure was small and neat, and her hair was dark maple-brown. Then she saw his shadow and whipped around, startling them both.

There was a delicate silence, while he waited politely for her to say something. When she merely stared at him with wide gray eyes, he smiled and collected his rudimentary German about him.

"I would sing you a song, lady, but my voice alone is far beneath your beauty, and, alas, my lute has lost its tune."

Then, unaccountably, she laughed. He was frozen for a tortured moment, fearing that she was another of these rude northerners who ridiculed the soft, French slur of his speech. But her eyes changed color and caught his, smilingly.

"A troubadour with a broken lute," she said. "That is most sad."

"The damage is not irreparable," he replied. "If I could find a string. . . ."

Her hand brushed his care aside. "My father has a carven-oak chestful. Come."

Their talk was easy and unstrained; he saw to that. But she was remarkably adept at it, and equally inclined, he noticed, to ignore him utterly. And not, he was careful to observe, from anything that even slightly resembled coquetry. It was because she found it difficult to believe what he was saying. But — and this gave him a certain sense of satisfaction — she cast him long, half-admiring glances that took in the firm, graceful lines of his body, of which he was modestly proud. Physically, he was more attractive than he had to be in order to be effective. And she had not yet heard his voice, which he justly considered his finest attribute.

That came later — when, his hands fondling his newly-strung lute, he played for her and sang a song about her great, sea-gray eyes, which were really her best feature. There was no doubt about that. And although her father, who had given up one of his dearly valued harp strings, glowered frequently during the performance, Alicia was completely apart, oblivious to all but the lyrical swelling of Gervais' beautiful voice.

*I am lost in the mirror of your eyes,
And I am born anew,
I fear my heart is far from wise,
But my love for you is true.*

At these last lines, her father started from his seat, glaring at the minstrel. "It is well you southerners sing of love and not of war. That is better left to men."

Gervais was too polite to reply that he thought the northern savages fit for little else than fighting, which was at best exercise of

a rather too strenuous sort. One learned to restrain one's retorts before regretting their escape.

"Minstrel, ha!" Alicia's father muttered, fiercely and not very inaudibly. "If he touches my harp —"

But Alicia was still listening for a note that might have lingered in the air.

Gervais found, after that night, that he did not have to go in search of her to court her. She always seemed to be *there*, waiting for him to tell her that her skin was warm and sweet as honey, her eyes like storm mist, her hair a burning ember. . . . And they were alone quite often enough for his purposes, which were, after all, of a serious but certainly not of a passionate sort.

She was fifteen and, naturally, betrothed — a fact which he assumed without giving it much thought. It was to be expected. He never mentioned the subject, of course, and he was rather surprised when she did. But then these northerners gave marriage a good deal more thought than he was accustomed to.

"He'll be the richest man in Saxony," she said, with more pride than accuracy.

He feigned interest. "Have you ever met him?"

She nodded. "His father sent him to mine for his fostering. We played together when we were children, sometimes. But he was five years older than I."

Gervais was silent, studying the pretty patterns on his lute.

"Of course, I haven't seen him, Peter, for a long time," she continued slowly. "He's coming back next week."

He hoped she would drop the matter, once she had spoken of it; but evidently the thought of Peter's forthcoming visit bothered her, for he could not take her mind off it all week. After nothing but abstracted stares and absent looks from the girl, Gervais was almost glad when the man finally arrived. Now he would see that Alicia settled back to normal, or, if this prospective husband were of an overly-possessive nature (as these Saxons were inclined to be), he would take his leave of this part of the country.

Alicia waited anxiously for Peter's first

*I love a lady, true and fair,
With sun-lit eyes and silken hair.*



*Illustration by
Jane Kennedy, '67*

greeting — a kiss which was clumsily given and, Gervais noted, frowning, even more awkwardly received. The girl appeared as nervous as a bride-groom, a fact which was observed by everybody with considerable merriment. Watched by a hundred laughing eyes, Alicia blushed furiously, then tried to cover her burning cheeks with her hands, while everyone smiled broad approval. Her father was the most obviously pleased. He seemed vastly relieved at Peter's presence, as if that would solve the problem of the minstrel. Glances in Gervais' direction were somewhat scornful, and they held a good deal of pity as well. After all, how could this pale Provencal match a strong, young Saxon? Alicia would soon be a happily married woman. It was a cheerful prospect, and everyone prepared to celebrate with appropriate glee. With a sniff of disgust at such childish proceedings, Gervais went off into the woods.

Spring was turning. Its hazy colors had given way to profusions of brightness in full flower. For Gervais, the delicate balance of the green world had been destroyed. It was marred by over-ripeness.

He sat down and fingered his lute absently, not at all surprised to find that Alicia had followed him. "You are not with your lord?"

"He is resting, and the feast is being prepared. I was not needed." She sat down beside him, hugging her knees to her. "Sing me a song," she commanded.

He responded with one he had sung often enough before and which she especially liked, but the effort was wasted. She wasn't listening at all. A bit disgruntled, he began a new song, saying the words to himself. His fingers lazily stroked the lute as he rhymed a couplet.

*I love a lady, true and fair,
With sun-lit eyes and silken hair.*

"Perfect," he said to the sky in a self-congratulatory tone.

"What?" She had not been paying attention.

"I've finished the last verse. Would you like to hear it?"

"Oh. Yes, of course."

He settled himself comfortably into a grassy hollow and began to pluck out the new song, pleasantly aware that his rate and quality of composition had never been better. But before the first verse was sung, he knew something was wrong. She stirred restlessly beside him, and he sensed her unhappiness.

"I don't want to be married," she said suddenly.

"Why not?" he asked. He was genuinely puzzled.

She stared at him in amazement. "But I love you. And if I love you, how can I marry Peter? Don't you see?"

He shook his head. "What does love have to do with marriage?"

This time her glare was one of amusement. "Quite a bit."

"That's ridiculous. Marriage is purely a contractual agreement which must be made in order to preserve the human race. It's nothing more than that. And it certainly doesn't prevent one from loving someone else. In fact, true love cannot and should not exist between husband and wife." He was quoting a well-learned formula, and it was quite obvious.

"Tell me," she said with a half smile, "the rest of the rules."

"I had thought you knew them well enough."

"Tell me one," she insisted stubbornly.

"Lovers turn pale in each other's presence."

"I blushed when Peter kissed me. Did you see?"

"I assure you, it was impossible to miss."

"And does that prove that I don't love him?"

"You can't love him."

"No, because I love you. Then I can't marry him either."

He laughed. "Do you mean to marry me?"

"Would that be so strange?"

He stared at her, shocked.

"What will you do," she asked, "if I do marry Peter?"

This was becoming all too blunt for his taste. "That depends on him."

"How so?" she persisted.

"He may object to my presence."

"In which case —"

"I would have to leave."

"That's very simple. And if he did not object, you would continue to sing songs to me and compose poetry whenever I wished?"

"Of course."

"Of course . . . You *are* a lover."

"It's my profession," he answered with a quiet dignity.

She looked down at her hands, clasped tightly in her lap. Then she tossed back the thick maple braids of her hair, and he saw her eyes grow dark, storm clouded. "Well then," she said, "there is a feast in my father's hall." Then she was gone.

Gervais stood up uncertainly. The child (and it was clear that she was only a child) was completely distraught. How absolutely foolish! Love was not something one rushed into headlong with no care for time-honored conventions. It showed a very juvenile attitude on her part. The only thing to do was to leave at once.

But he did not find himself going. Instead he returned to the castle, hurrying along the path whose riotous colors so assaulted his sensitivity. This time the assaults were made by the time-honored conventions which he was remembering in their entirety. He had always prided himself that he never let his passions interfere in the careful art of love. But he had just as strongly refused to let jealousy enter into his love affairs as well, and now it came with a rush. Love once diminished was seldom recaptured, and new love was stronger than old. The state of jealousy, he was discovering, no matter how desirable it might be, was most unpleasant.

In the great hall, Alicia was dancing and flirting outrageously with her partner. The purple velvet kirtle swirled up to uncover her blue skirts as she flung herself into wild, delighted ecstasy. There was, Gervais realized, a wholly different set of rules to the game she was playing now, and Peter knew them as well as she.

They are not suited to each other, Gervais thought fiercely and unreasonably. They match too well. She would do better with her exact physical opposite than with this tall lordly personage, golden-skinned and

sable-eyed. . . . Gervais was only a year older than he, and *his* silken fairness was certainly more appealing to the cultured female mind. Or it always had been.

He took advantage of the first pause in the breathless excitement to slip into a chair next to Alicia's. "There is another rule," he whispered to her. "The true lover can never think of anything but his beloved."

She returned briefly to his world. "And do you think of nothing but me?" she inquired.

"My only other thoughts are of that monstrous creature who will be your husband."

She raised her eyebrows inquisitively, "Jealousy, my dear?"

"Jealousy serves only to make love stronger." He brought his head closer to hers and lowered his voice even more. "The one desire of a lover is to please his beloved in all things. You asked if I would marry you."

"It's quite impossible, you know."

"Oh, yes, I know. But I would do it. And I'll stay, if you wish."

"Would you enjoy sharing me?"

"A woman may be loved by two men at the same time."

"Yes, but I don't think the other man would understand." She put her hand on the lute he held tightly under his arm. "Love can deny to love, so do this for me. Go away from here, for I think you will find few to listen to your songs now."

That was true. Her father had taken down his great harp, and plucked chords from it that Gervais' world would not have understood. And Alicia was alive, awakened from enchantment.

He left the hall and went out into the early summer sunlight. It was too warm for comfort, and the birds were chattering in a most disorderly manner. The flowers, the trees, sun, earth, and sky were all too bright and bold. There was, he reflected, too much of everything, but remembering Alicia's ginger red lips, he did not really object.

Moderation in all things. Passion dulls the senses. However . . .

The sky was azure, spread with smoke-clouds that fled the streaming brilliance of the sun. Gervais brushed the strings of his lute and walked north.

From

My Sunday Window

CLAIRE KEARNEY, '69

What November kind of day is this? Why the springing warmth and mildness streaming through with tree-strained sunshine? Must weather too be life incongruent?

A small fuzz particle courses by my eyes, sparkles for a moment in a glint of sunshine, then spirals on through space. A nun carrying a couple of liquor cartons (Funny, isn't it?) walks past two girls. Lilting, cheery, she says, "Hello, girls. How are you? Nice day, isn't it?" Yes, it's nice out and every one is happy — as appearances go.

Blonded Sue walks by. The boy, an arm around her shoulder, drags on a cigarette and that's all there is in the world.

Who are you waiting for, motorcycle boy in parka blue? A proper lady girl, not so refined or mature or fine young womanish that you can not make her play with you? Take her now before it's too late and save her, save her from greatness.

Boy in saddle shoes and dotted tie, hair unrumpled by the breeze, why do you walk so stiffly? Are you going to see a girl costumed, masked like you? O you leaden

clown. Why have you crushed joy?

Mother, father, with your daughter all dressed up in Sunday best, look properly parentish. Make a few appropriate comments to housemother or nun: "Isn't it a beautiful day?" "Lovely."

Say it a thousand million times till it chokes in your throat. Then go outside and be with the day and say it once more. For the first time.

Girls and boys jaunt by laughing, joking, talking a little loudly. Let your eyes alight and your teeth, though maybe crooked, show. Throw your head back when you laugh and let joy shake the sedate air.

Sacred Heart, I see you from my window like an iron mummy foolishly posed, your hands jutting into space. How do you like those geraniums circling your feet? Just lovely, aren't they? Christ, how you must laugh at these absurd effigies. Don't they know you were a man? Haven't they heard that your friends were a rough and rowdy bunch, that you associated with drunkards and prostitutes? Why have I never seen a

statue of you eating and drinking with Matthew's friends or talking to the woman with five husbands?

O how life is ironic. Why must people distort things so? Will you just tell me one thing? How can I read "Corinna's Going A-Maying" when from all sides I hear the tension and confusion of our times?

"Two Wounded In Roxbury Shooting..."

Come, let us go while we are in our
prime

And take the harmless folly of the time
"South Boston Blaze Drives 17 to the
Street . . ."

Then while time serves, and we are but
decaying

Come, my Corinna, come let's go
a-Maying

Outside my Sunday window now, I see no
one coming and going. Looking at the
straight line of parked cars, the Gothic som-
ber brick, the deadly perfect shrubbery, a
Chesterton line speaks itself to me: "Man is

more himself, man is more manlike, when
joy is the fundamental thing in him."

I will throw on a sweatshirt and a pair of
old sneakers. I will climb up on my window-
sill and then I will leap out to catch the day.
"Yippee. Look at me. I'm flying." And then
the trees will begin to chuckle, and their
branches will tremble at first and then shake
when the trees roar. I will swoop down and
tickle the cars and all of a sudden their
horns will sound in all different ranges. "Joy-
Joy-Joy," they will sing. Then all the people
will come out to see me flying; the cafeteria
men and the girls in their rooms and the
walking-walking sisters. I will look down on
all of them and say, "Come up with me.
Spread your arms! Kick your legs! Shout a
song!" Then they will all lightly rise from
the ground and begin to sing and to dance
with each other in the air. Laughing, laugh-
ing, we will whirl around. And below us the
buildings will sway and the statues will smile
and swing their arms and all things will
move, in time to the joy of creation.

In the *Atlantic* College Contests for 1967, the following *Ethos* contributors
have received recognition.

Short Story

Certificate of Merit: Deborah Field, '68

Essay

Honorable Mention: Frances Panaraskas, '69

Poetry

Honorable Mention: Elaine Carroll, '68

Certificate of Merit: Paula Duggan, '69

Certificate of Merit: Jane O'Connell, '69

Deaf Ted, Danoota & Me (& Our Friend Malcolm & Our Faithful Frog Besideus) Fight the Grorks

EILEEN GUNN, '67

"It's grorks!" cried Danoota in glee. "Anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, anti-integrationist grorks!"

"Sounds like the Know-Nothing Party," quipped Ted. Nobody laughed except the frog, who always laughs at Ted's jokes, though I couldn't tell you why. Danoota gave him a vicious swipe with her riding crop, and it served him right, too, the little blighter.

"It *are* grorks," insisted Malcolm, which is one reason why we don't always bring him along. He was wearing his red velvet outfit with the gold epaulettes, and you couldn't tell him anything. Scenting the grorks, (we were downwind), I reared, momentarily surprised, and Malcolm clutched wildly in front of himself and grabbed my tail, forgetting what happened the last time he tried that. Fortunately for him, I was beginning to recover my composure, and controlled myself pretty well, considering. Malcolm emerged from the bushes in a plaid snit, which didn't at all become him, and climbed up on my back without speaking. I had lost my place in my book, and it was all Malcolm's fault, making such a fuss, so I looked away from him to let him know, and wouldn't take any of the tangerine he offered.

"Well, are we all going to just sit here?" demanded Danoota in a rage. "Except you, Ralph," she added softly. I said nothing and ate the leaves off a nearby shrub. I had always ignored Danoota's advances, which may have been why Danoota was the way she was.

Ted thereupon waved his earhorn, which I took to be a signal to retreat, and I galloped wildly away in several directions. The others weren't paying much attention to either of us, absorbed as they were in a game of gin rummy, and you can imagine their surprise when they looked up and found themselves a half-mile away from the grorks. Malcolm thought they were running away from us and secretly signaled to me not to let them escape. I got confused again and stopped short, scattering the cards. Malcolm didn't mind, really, because he had been losing anyway, and Danoota was more concerned with the grorks than anything else.

"Damn the torpedoes!" she shouted irrelevantly. Our faithful frog sneered, as he had never cared much for Danoota personally and was inclined to view anything she said with profound skepticism. Ted nudged Malcolm.

"What's she got against tomatoes?" he asked confusedly.

"Use your earhorn, you blithering beetle-brow," snarled Danoota. She started to sing the rallying song that I had written, and the others joined in, harmonizing or not, as was their wont. The emotional impact brought tears to my eyes, and, partially blinded, I charged straight for the fast-disappearing grorks. The others held on tight, singing at the tops of their lungs. The wind whipped my mane, and would have carried off Ted's

hat if he hadn't had it securely fastened with paperclips and a rubber band.

The grorks heard us coming, although, being hard of hearing, and somewhat dim-witted, they are usually oblivious to anything but Catholics, Jews, and Integrationists. (They don't have anything against Negroes, really, as long as they Keep Their Place.) But at our approach the immense herd of grorks raised their heads, sniffing at the wind. Of course they couldn't smell *us*, but they somehow sensed danger, for they assumed their battle formation, females and young to the front, males to the rear, trembling.

It wasn't odd that they should have sensed our approach, for Danoota and I were singing and laughing, Ted was blowing moose-calls through his earhorn, and our faithful frog Besideus was croaking in a jovial tone. Malcolm was busy with the firecrackers, sorting and painting them, and trying desperately to tie his shoelaces.

"The mail must go through!" cried Malcolm, momentarily confused. Danoota glared at him, but said nothing. Ted waved his sword, which was rusty and showed gaping holes in the hilt where he had pawned the jewels many years before.

"Cha-a-a-arge!" he shouted, inadvertently slipping into military jargon, and, with a sudden burst of speed, I plunged into the midst of the maddened grorks, who grorggled fiercely. Afraid of stepping on one (or two, or twenty-seven), I pulled to a halt. Nobody was really certain as to exactly what one did in such a situation. We hadn't met with any real action in years, and we certainly hadn't planned any strategy for this encounter. The grorks, likewise, had had even less experience with us. Everyone was at a complete loss.

I pulled out my battle manual and pored over it nervously. Grackles, purple . . . graft, political . . . grinding, exceeding fine . . . "Here it is. 'Grorks.'" At breakfast . . . a-tremble . . . attacking. I read the passage aloud. "The attacking, or Smithering's, grork is a dangerous, albeit somewhat stupid, foe, possessing razor-like tusks and an im-

penetrable horned head. When attacked by (or, indeed, when attacking) Smithering's grork, you are best advised to have stayed at home; it is certain death.'" There was a respectful silence, broken finally by Ted's querulously high voice.

"It all sounds rather final, don't you think?" he asked the group as a whole. We all agreed, it did sound final. The grorks, who had been listening attentively, nodded. They had had little idea they were so dangerous, and it sounded pretty final to them, too. The initiative was ours though, and Malcolm, sensing an opportunity, pulled out his speech on Free Trade and the British Empire and began reading selected highlights aloud to the grorks. They stirred restlessly, and several of them yawned behind their lace fans. Our faithful frog Besideus fell asleep. He'd heard the speech before. Ted, however, was politely attentive, and even joined in occasionally, reciting his favorite parts right along with Malcolm. Danoota and I debated quietly as to the feasibility of a general discussion afterward; she had started to set up the platform and colored banners when we detected a certain animosity on the part of the grorks. I spoke to them in a soft, soothing tone, and assured them that they'd all get a chance to speak. The dissent grew more obvious. One of the grorks lifted his tuskéd, beakéd head and called out delicately, "Why don't youse go back where youse came from?"

Their childlike approach to the situation amused Danoota, who replied experimentally, "Aaaah, yer mother wears army surplus raincoats!!"

The grorks stood on tiptoe (for they are only forty-two inches high) and called back as fiercely as possible, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but woids'll neveh hoit me."

Some sort of American accent; I noted it duly in my looseleaf. "Say something in American," I suggested.

"Thirty-two, forty-seven, twenty-five, hike!" Malcolm called out obligingly. There was a brief disturbance, and three of the grorks broke away from the herd and ran sixty-seven yards for a touchdown.



"I sing New England . . .

She still is there . . .

To open for the world a purer hour."

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

Day of the Salem Hangings

the heavy sun dawns pallid
through the vapor of decay
upon the witch's plantations, where
deep in cabbage slime, the cows wait bursting
let us go to a Salem circle
let us join a ring of giggles
the void for the witches
drummers drum, drum tongues dumb
stillness becomes us
we are still as gallows
on the brink of breath . . .
witches
in a line
come upon the shaded dust
soft as moonbeams
soon
by the guilt of their own weight
in the appearance of men they hang
they play in the loud invisible wind
their eyes, still wet
shine like many shining suns
this Salem hour riots through many orbits
back to the wall of time
Cain's moment . . .
and that which was trembling is suddenly still
our eyes that saw not
awake to death . . .

JANE O'CONNELL, '69

Local Color

William Hall in his latter days
in order to get away from it all
retreated to the hill-wooded heart of the county.
He claimed the land
and built a shack
and in 1811, he, William Hall —
 sound of mind and body
 being sound as he could be —
chiseled his rockbound testament
in a flat convenient boulder.
In the Lord's year 1811,
William Hall left his lands behind —
 the heights, the blueberry bush plateau
 where now the airport sprawls —
bequeathed to God
and the city of Worcester.
Then to fly this vale of tears
he constructed, with antique design,
cardboard wings
and soon, from a small, not high,
but jutting cliff
took off.

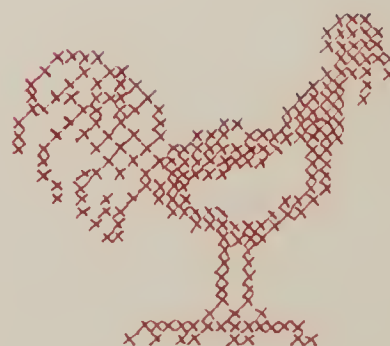
KATHLEEN ROGERS, '69



TO ANNE

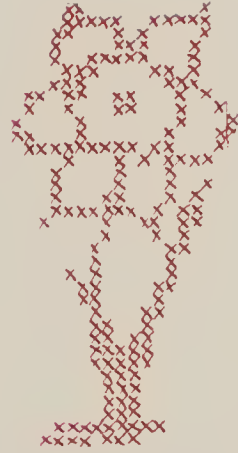
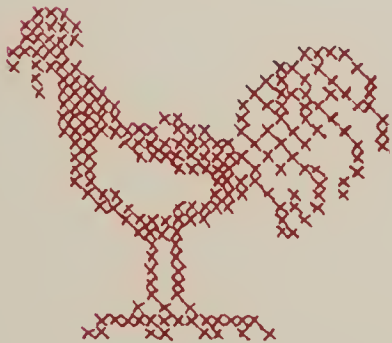
You were synthesised
on page twenty-three
of *American Literature One*
and your 'Contemplations' followed
for two pages —
sufficient space
for nature, grace
and a 'dear and loving husband'

Quick
now hickory skin peels smooth
March melts
into lime sap
and deep-ground down
New England's spine rock curves
resigning itself
to spring
Quick
now noon sings to cinder
with lyrics
of Emily Dickinson
and quick
in this now of awaken
I remember you
Anne Bradstreet



BRADSTREET

You are dismissed
by critics
as an early effort
and yet I savor you
Anne Bradstreet,
for every inch of idleness —
one streak of soulshine
shafting sobriety through



Quick
now bloodroot pierces earth
till its wounded
frostbite smarts
but you, Tenth Muse
alien unsprung
could soothe
in this raw resilience
Quick
now equinox spirals
chastening everymorn
to Sabbath
and quick
in this now of unbending
I remember
love's leaven and you

ELAINE CARROLL, '68

Cross-country

Race

at Concord

Every time I run a race like this I swear I'll never
run again but here I am
jostling for a good position —
scared to death and anxious for the gun.
Why run when you don't want to, when you hurt
all over at the end? Don't shove me . . . there's the gun.

Run run, pump-legs run.
Scatter the leaves of autumn
running
over the hill
the heartbreak hill,
Auburn Street in the
afternoon,
chestnut trees
horse-chestnuts falling
down
on the muddy lovely pathways.

Fly feet fly
round White Park Pond
with the ducklings quacking
racking cackling
dirty in the rock mud waters smelling.
One more and I pass the one with glasses —
holds the record down at Keene. I'll take him
but I can't run can't run can't breathe . . . faster.
There I've got him good. Hey,
Bye, Bye Keene boy, see you at the finish.

Run run, pump-legs run.
Jump through the mud
no traction slipping
pounding pounding
over the hard and grounding
roadway,
breathing running gulps
of air, not
breathing —
grabbing,
grab at any breath
and run
down the last hill
toward the high school.
Kill thrill
hill of hills
and higher lying.
Watch the people
watch their faces,
run to the colors
patching, matching
catching colors
in an afternoon of running
running.

People, watching like it hurt them more than me.
They know it hurts to run strong at the end
(the way I'm running strong)
nothing at the end, no medal ribbons waiting.
Only snake oil liniment and tape.
I'm done, I crossed the line. I never want to run again
and yet it feels so fine.

MARY LUTI, '69

I, the American

I am the American
you saw when the brown
and hollow face came
whistling round the corner
— Boylston and Tremont
near the Common.
I am the one who leaps,
(is it without fear
as they say?)
from steel to steel above the city
as the others, gone now,
leapt from crag to stone
searching for the wolves
and white men.
I almost bumped you,
actually I did, but not hard,
I brushed your jacket and
smiled with a bronze mouth,
but my teeth were white
very white.
I lifted my riveter's hat
and ran my fingers
through my straight hair,
and wished it were longer —
then, catching my image in
the drugstore window,
I cursed you and Jim Thorpe.

JANICE WALSH, '68



Common-tary



Wallace Stevens: A View from Within

ELAINE CARROLL, '68

"Sometimes I wish I wore no crown — that I trod on something thicker than air — that there were no robins, no peach dumpplings or violets in my world — that I was the proprietor of a patent medicine store — and that my name was Asa Snuff." So Wallace Stevens confided to his diary (published posthumously in *Letters of Wallace Stevens*) on November 10, 1900 — the same Wallace Stevens who, in the 1950's, won two National Book Awards and a Pulitzer Prize for his poetry, who wrote in a style often criticized as ambiguous, who looked at a black-bird in thirteen ways, and who lived a conventionally approved existence as an insurance executive for over forty years.

Thus, Stevens was many men, yet one man only. This is the enigma — and it is one which can best be interpreted by listening to Stevens' own voice as it re-echoes throughout his books of poetry and as it whispers, examining itself, in the collection of private Journals and letters edited several months ago by his daughter. In this selection of personal writings, one can discover the growth of a poet — a process often exuberant, often painful, but always conscious and always highlighted by a marvelous sense of irony, incongruity, and affectionate humor.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1879, Wallace Stevens had an economically and socially comfortable life. Summertime provided opportunities, not always welcomed by Stevens, to visit with relatives in the country, and necessitated the writing of letters home — for sympathy, money, or the sheer fun of communicating and exercising his talent for witty observation. One can see in the letters to his mother, written at fifteen, vivid imagination, a mature grasp of circumstances, a unique range and use of vocabulary, and a buoyant sense of comedy, sharp

enough to pick out the funnybone in any uncanny situation.

In a note to his mother, dated July 1895, he declares staunchly, "I hate *ladies?* (such as are here). They are all agreeable enough but familiarity breeds contempt — poor deluded females — they are contemptible without familiarity." Continuing, Stevens reveals, "I did not go down to dinner, hoping thus to add a stimulus to supper, which consisted of some unnameable smathering of greasy fritters, a measly plate of measly beef and of course the inevitable applesauce."

He writes later, bemoaning the fate of his older brother Garrett, or "Buck".

Garrett has paired himself with Bertha Rosalie, and between his arduous affection and his meals he has not much spare time. At present he is on the top of the house with his Rosalie, author of 'Listigzaneticus or Who Stabbed the Cook,' and while they together bask Buck's kaleidoscopic feelings have inspired the keen, splattering, tink-a-tink-tink-tink-tink-a-a-a that are gamboling off the hackneyed strings of his quivering mandolin.

In a letter sent home the following summer, Stevens attempts a descriptive definition of his situation. Using detailed language and concrete imagery with unusual fluidity, Stevens emerges as an acute observer and poet-potential at sixteen. Having noted the general atmosphere, Stevens continues,

An antique bureau, daguerreotypes of some ancient people, . . . an ill-fed carpet, a featherbed reaching to my girth, with linen trappings, that is my room by day. Gloomy cadaverous shadows, a ha'moon astride a crowing cock on a gilded weather-vane, . . . — that is my room by night.

A Puritan who revels in catechisms and creeds, a hand to mouth man, earnest, determined, discreet — Uncle Isaac. A self-sacrificing, whole-souled woman who says not much but too well — that is Aunt Mariah. Emma — well Emma reminds me of a tub of lilies — you must pull aside the leaves to see the flowers.

True to form, Stevens injects a bit of consciously hyperbolic egotism, signing himself, "Forever with supernal affection, thy rosy-lipped archangelic jeune, Wallace Stevens."

But by the following year, even a precocious "archangel" had to come down to earth and, according to the traditional norms of the upper class, follow a pattern of serious study with a definite, practical end in view. And so, Stevens went to Harvard eager to become a writer of some sort. Despite his

superior intelligence and mature outlook on life, Wallace Stevens proved a typical college student in one respect. Early in November, Stevens' father wrote to him and forewarned in closing that, "Your Mother is making up some sort of a blanket, a Robe-de-Nuit, something to cover your abused anatomy as you wander beer physicked through the Halls to the toilet — and is designing some unheard of way of sending it."

Nevertheless, this temporary "vice" did not prohibit Stevens from succeeding in his studies. Besides taking a broad curriculum, which included languages, history and government, Stevens started an intensive personal reading program. In a letter to his son, Mr. Stevens declares, "I am glad to see your midyear report — and since they don't keep away 'A' in your midyear bag I think you have applied yourself with assiduity and come out creditably. Stick to it my boy — I know you can do whatever any other fellow did and perhaps — who knows — just a little slicker."

Little did Wallace's pragmatic father realize that while his son continued to stash A's in his "midyear bag," he began to reach beyond the limits of the academic world and to probe the vastness of reality. A developing sense of Romanticism, plus the ever-present intellectual acumen, sent Stevens wandering across the local countryside to investigate nature with the scrupulosity of a poet-scientist. Noting detail after detail, Stevens extracted truths from their minute cocoons, and freed them to expand into universals. After one of his walks, he writes in his *Journal*, "Out in the open air with plenty of time and space I felt how different literary emotions were from natural feelings. On the top of the hill I stood for about a quarter of an hour watching whatever color could break through the clouds . . ." This same spirit of excitement and wonder reappears in entry after entry. Examining nature, he attempts to penetrate appearances:

A valley choked with corn assumes a newer and more potent interest when one comes to notice the blade-like wind among the leaves. . . . Orchards are enriched by the thought that they were almost prismatic in May, and by the sound of the rain upon their invisible leaves at midnight . . . it is the getting below

the delightful enough exterior that is the source of real love for the country and open air."

Years later, in "Country Words," Stevens re-expresses this idea of essence symbolically.

In a slow-chanting rhythm he asks:

What is it that my feeling seeks?
I know from all the things it touched
And left beside and left behind,
It wants the diamond pivot bright.

Stimulated both by this perceptive contact with the physical world and by increasing familiarity with literature, Stevens became interested in the study and composition of poetry. Although still an undergraduate, he took the business of writing quite seriously. In fact, he sounds almost boastful — or pseudo-sophisticated — as he proclaims, with as much objectivity as he can muster:

I find that in the early part of this book (the *Journal*) I have written that I could never be a great poet except in mute feeling. This is a silly and immature observation. If my feelings or anybody's are so great that they would make great poetry, be sure that they are great poetry and he who feels them is a great poet.

And yet, in other passages he seems merely elated at his growing poetic sensitivity. It is with more typical relish that he notes:

The fronds of a fern were dangling over my knees and I felt lazy and content. Once as I looked up I saw a big, pure drop of rain slip from leaf to leaf of a clematis vine. The thought occurred to me that it was just such quick, unexpected, commonplace, specific things that poets and other observers jot down in their notebooks. It was certainly a monstrous pleasure to be able to be specific about such a thing.

But if Wallace Stevens was delighted with his poetical tendencies, his father unfortunately failed to share his enthusiasm. In a brief note to his son, he declared, "I am convinced from the Poetry(?) you write your Mother that the afflatus is not serious — and does not interfere with some real hard work."

Besides growing in his appreciation of nature, Stevens began to develop a theory of art and its relation to reality. In so doing, he encountered the eternal problem of art vs. nature which had vexed numerous writers throughout history and was to become one of his own major concerns. A *Journal* entry, written while Stevens was still at Harvard, reveals his early opinion that

Art for Art's sake is both indiscreet and worthless. It opposes the common run of

things by simply existing for its own sake. . . . Art must fit with other things; it must be part of the system of the world. . . . What does not have a kinship . . . an inspiration and indissolubility with our lives ought not . . . have a place in them.

Here Stevens asserts that art must have an intrinsic relation to life and all of existence; it must be part of the world's harmony. But whether art *is*, in actuality, so related to man and the universe, Stevens cannot yet say. Nor does he prove the existence of this world "system." It is aesthetic difficulties such as these which he must confront as his concern with art, reality and poetry increases.

And so, by the time Wallace Stevens was twenty, he had already considered those ideas which would occupy his mind throughout his life — aesthetics, imagination, poetry, reality, metaphysics and the complex of human emotions. Within this framework, he saw, and later dealt with, the paradoxes of individuality and universality, fancy and practicality, exteriority or existence and interiority or essence, and objectivity and subjectivity in creation.

But in his search for a unification of such opposing forces, Stevens always maintained his sense of detached amusement. Thus, upon arriving in New York after graduation to try his hand at journalism — a venture which proved mightily unsuccessful —, he remarks with typical subtlety, "All New York, as I have seen it, is for sale —. . . Thank Heaven the winds are not generated in Yorksville, or the clouds manufactured in Harlem. What a price they would bring!" And in a slightly later entry, he notes with wry satisfaction:

I am beginning to hate the stinking restaurants that line the street. . . . Today I bought a box of strawberries and ate them in my room for luncheon. Tomorrow I propose to have a pineapple; the next day, blackberries; the next, bananas etc.

Nevertheless, this continual quest for synthesis *was* serious and encompassed all levels of life. In his Journals and letters, as well as in his poems, Stevens seeks harmony within himself, within the reality around him, and ultimately, a harmony of the former and the latter — of internal and external. For, on each of these three levels, he sees a dichotomy, an underlying paradox which he feels, must be resolved into a meaningful order.

In his own person, Stevens could recognize two opposing strains — humility and egotism. On one hand, he was a man of quiet restraint, with a deep sense of privacy. He insists, in one entry, "Personality must be kept secret from the world." Again, after *Poetry* magazine reprinted four of his pieces and awarded him the Levenson Prize, Stevens writes editor Harriet Monroe, "I am much more modest than you think; or than the overblown bloom I am suggests. Really, the bouquet in this month's *Poetry* will drive me to back alleys and the suburbs." He always disliked meeting and speaking before large groups; even when he became Vice-President of the Hartford Company, he kept his growing poetic fame from business associates. "I am sure that most people here in Hartford know nothing about the poetry and I am equally sure that I don't want them to know because once they know they don't seem to get over it."

Despite his public reserve, Stevens was a staunch individualist. The very fact that he carefully recorded his impressions in diaries and letters substantiates this. Although not always confident that he himself *would* succeed, Stevens insisted that it was only through the self that he, or anyone, *could* succeed. Thus, the idea of the individual was basic to Stevens' very philosophy of life. What mattered in existence was one's *own* insights into reality, one's *own* conception of things. This, after all, was the only way for man to perceive — through the various aspects of personal experience. The "ipse" was always focal for Stevens; nor was this inclination towards the significant ego ever denied by him. In fact, early in life Stevens leaned, without apology, toward a certain selfishness. Speaking of his loneliness in New York, he remarks, "I wish a thousand times a day that I had a wife. I begin to feel the vacuum that wives fill. This will probably make poor reading to a future bachelor. Wife's an old word — which does not express what I mean — rather a delightful companion who would make a fuss over me."

Gradually, this notion of the individual's importance matured from the merely self-centered to the philosophical. This decline in

selfishness per se was due, in part, to Stevens' love affair with Elsie Moll. Thanks to the services of the U.S. mail and infrequent visits to Pennsylvania, Stevens fell out of his complete self-concern and into love. Struggling to maintain his manly detachment, he notes in his Journal, — not without some humor —

Last week was the first since Elsie and I began writing to one another that I have not had a letter from her . . . I say to myself that I am sure to hear from her in the morning and I convince myself that if I do not I shall feel abominably cut up; and no doubt I shall. I think I shall have to use the tactics approved of by the novelists — feigning indifference and the like.

With the development of his thinking to a philosophical level, Stevens contended that man could only find existential meaning within himself. He writes to his future bride, Elsie, "Life seems glorious for a while, then it seems poisonous. But you must never lose faith. . . . Only you must find the glory for yourself. Do not look for it either, except in yourself." Moreover, Stevens, rather like Kant, came to hold that the cognitive reality of things was subjective rather than objective, that truth existed according to the individual mind. Here, the self is vital not out of mere indulgence, but out of the necessity of experiencing life. Regarding this deeper interpretation of the ego, Stevens reveals to Elsie, "I long for solitude — not the solitude of a few rooms, but the solitude of self. I want to know about myself, about my world, about my future when the world ends." This he reiterates in his poem "Bantams in Pine Woods":

Fat! Fat! Fat! Fat! I am the personal. Your world is you. I am my world.

But, despite the significance of the self in his philosophy, Stevens is still able to treat it wittily and to see the absurdity and folly in man. He writes to Harriet Monroe, "I am enclosing another scrap, but it is the best I can do. If it is of no use, don't hesitate to say so. Of course, I shall be furious. But what of it? The egotism of poets is disgusting." Later he expands this mildly satirical view:

Anyone who has known a number of poets must have been struck by their extraordinary egotism. There is not the slightest doubt that egotism is at the bottom of everything every-

body does, and that, if some really acute observer made as much of egotism as Freud has made of sex, people would forget a good deal about sex and find the explanation for everything in egotism.

But for Stevens, egotism in its deepest meaning *did* lie at the bottom of everything; and he himself was the "acute observer" who pointed this out.

For ultimately, it was in the person that Stevens found the harmonizer of art, and thus, life. Examining aesthetics, — the basic theme of his poetry — Stevens grants the artist the greatest prominence. According to his aesthetic theory, objects most truly exist in the imagination where they signify expressed thoughts. Moreover, the world outside is not essentially what is seen, but what is felt. This sensed universe serves as raw material for the individual imagination. And it is this other world of the mind or imagination which is true reality — although, admittedly, it depends on the stimulation of an exterior environment. Therefore, while Stevens does not deny the value of the natural world at all, he locates comprehensible reality in the imagination. In the process of structuring actuality, the self is the important factor; the movement from sensation to creation is a strictly personal one.

Art, Stevens contends, is the result or expression of such imaginative thinking. It is the supreme manner of grappling with reality because it is a concretizing of the imagination's creative act — the forming of reality by abstraction. Art, via the artist's creativity, brings order from chaos.

Besides presenting ideas about art in general, Stevens concentrates on the specific aesthetic problems and relationships of poetry. He seeks a rationale for his own work, as well as an explanation and synthesis of reality and the imagination in the realm of poetry. This concern with the extremes of particular and abstract is confessed to by the poet in his letters. He notes, for example, that "During the winter I have written something like 35 or 40 short pieces. . . . They deal with the relation or balance between imagined things and real things which . . . is a constant source of trouble to me. . . . I have been trying to see the world about me

both as I see it and as it is. This means seeing the world as an imaginative man sees it." "Real" here refers not to the reality which Stevens finds in the individual mind. Rather, it is the objective reality of Nature — the particulars of the world as it is *normally* viewed.

Unfortunately, as Stevens stresses in his *Journal*, most people fail even to observe and appreciate their material surroundings:

I thought, on the train how utterly we have forsaken the Earth, in the sense of excluding it from our thoughts. There are but few who consider its physical hugeness, its rough enormity. . . . There was a girl on the train with a face like the underside of a moonfish. Her talk was of dances and men. For her, Sahara had no sand, Brazil no mud.

But Stevens was one of the few who bothered to notice the phenomena of the world. From childhood he had viewed the face of nature with amazing sensitivity. Continuing to scrutinize the cosmos about him, Wallace Stevens piles one exact, poetic description upon another in his letters and diaries. In various passages in his *Journals* and letters he records such vivid impressions:

Some of the berry bushes had turned purple and there were plenty of green boughs of something or other. Spring comes this way, trait by trait. . .

If you feel about New England as I felt when I returned on Saturday, you will be surprised at your passion for it. . . . The ground is still covered with snow, but the grass is coming through, matted down like the hair on a horse that has been in the stable too long.

The stars are clear and golden and geometrical. . . . I rather like that idea of geometrical — it's so confoundedly new!

We have had all the dreariness of life falling down (more or less) in rain week after week until it has come to seem like life up a spout or round about a great sewer. . . . Things come up in the garden and hang their heads. At the moment azaleas are just going and rhododendrons are coming in — poor old things with their leaves glistening wet day and night.

But, while he delighted in the natural variety, Stevens felt the need of unifying the diversity into a coherent whole. Again, he is seeking harmony; he is tackling the metaphysical problem of the one and the many. And although he is usually idealistic about his power to produce the synthesis, Stevens himself occasionally becomes skeptical. An optimist at heart, he is not alien to moments

of doubt and discouragement with himself and his abilities. One entry in his diary reads, ". . . feeling rather lonely and afraid of the illusions and the daydreams and frightened at the way things are going, so slowly, so unprofitably, so unambitiously." And writing to his wife about his poetic difficulties in particular, Stevens reveals, "I am quite blue about the flimsy little things I have done in the month or more you have been away. They seem so slight and unimportant . . ."

However, Wallace Stevens could never become essentially skeptical. He always maintained his conviction that imagination and its resulting art, by transforming objective experience, could effect the synthesis — could construct a unified reality by means of abstraction. In a way, Stevens gives aesthetics the traditional realms of philosophy and places as its ultimate goal the attainment of harmony and truth. Imagination and the process of transformation were thus of great importance. Having undergone the original experience, the artist could transform it in his imagination and create a new coherent reality — art.

It is not only children who live in a world of imagination. All of us do that. But after living there to the degree that a poet does, the desire to get back to the everyday world becomes so keen that one turns away from the imaginative world . . . and yet . . . the imaginative world is the only real world, after all.

He also clarifies his ideas on transformation and abstraction when he states, for example, "Imagination has no source except in reality. . . . Here is a fundamental principle about the imagination: it does not create except as it transforms." Moreover, he writes, "The trouble is that poetry is so largely a matter of transformation. To describe a cup of tea without changing it and without concerning oneself with some extreme aspect of it is not at all the easy thing that it seems to be." Even in such poems as "The Man With The Blue Guitar," Stevens deals with the subject.

The world washed in his imagination,
The world was a shore, whether sound
or form
Or light, the relic of farewells,
Rock, of valedictory echoings,
To which his imagination returned,
From which it sped, a bar in space,

. . . The swarm of thoughts, the swarm
of dreams
Of inaccessible Utopia.

Over and over, Stevens stresses the interaction of man and his environment, the individual imagination and physical "reality." As he points out, man both bends and is bent by his surroundings: ". . . just as objects in nature offset us . . . so, on the other hand, we affect nature by projecting our moods, emotions, etc." Artistically, too, the poet must both command a situation and yet be attached to that specific situation as the source of stimulation. Stevens best unifies the various elements of his aesthetic theory — the individual artist, imagination, reality, transformation, the desired synthesis — in a statement made to a friend. "When I was a boy," he recalls, "I used to think that things progressed by contrasts . . . Afterwards I came to think more of the energizing that comes from mere interaction . . . giving and taking are illimitable. They make things interdependent and their interdependence sustains them . . ."

In addition to dealing with theories, Stevens also speaks specifically of poetry and its practice. Ideally, for him, poetry is the apprehension of an ordered state of being — a state which is not one of imitation but creation. When discussing various aspects of poetry in his letters, the author always brings out its vital importance to man's existence. "Life without poetry is, in effect, life without a sanction." Reiterating this need for poetry, he declares, "Poetry is the spirit as the poem is the body . . . The validity of the poet as a figure of prestige . . . is wholly a matter of this, that he adds to life that without which life cannot be lived." Again, in "The Man With The Blue Guitar," he illustrates his meaning:

A poem like a missal found
In the mud, a missal for that young man,
That scholar hungriest for that book,
The very book or, less, a page
Or, at least, a phrase, that phrase,
A hawk of life, that latined phrase:
To know; . . .

Writing of poetry on another occasion, Stevens presents one of the paradoxes with which he contended: "But poetry," he insists, "is essentially romantic, only the ro-

mantic of poetry must be something constantly new and, therefore, just the opposite of what is spoken of as the romantic. . . . What one is always doing is keeping the romantic pure: eliminating from it what people speak of as the romantic."

Stevens also considers the role of the poet as determining personality. Describing the poet as one who searches for the universal in the particular, he notes, "The poet records his experiences as poet in subjects and words which are part of that experience. He knows that nothing but the truth of that experience means anything to him or anyone else." Having set up a standard for poets in general, Stevens goes on to treat the modern writer. Defending him against the stigma of oddity, he insists, "The contemporary poet is simply a contemporary man who writes poetry. He looks like anyone else, wears the same kind of clothes and certainly is not an incompetent."

Asked about his own work, Stevens admits that he writes primarily for his own fulfillment. The opinion of critics seems to matter relatively little, for he states, "I know that people judge one by volume. However, having elected to regard poetry as a form of retreat, the judgment of people is neither here nor there." Again he maintains, "I write poetry because I want to write it."

Stevens' opinion of his own work follows his personal motives for writing. As his letters reveal, he never consciously aims at obscurity; he merely composes what for *him* is apparent. "To my way of thinking there is not the slightest affectation in anything that I do. I write as I do, not because it satisfies me, but because no other way satisfies me. . . . The worst part of this aberration is that I am convinced that it is not an aberration." The audience is secondary; therefore he can phrase his works as his mind alone dictates. Since his poems are so closely related to him as individual, Stevens can criticize his inabilities. Early in his career, he confides to his wife, "At any rate, my trifling poesies are like the trifling designs on fans." Stevens could also point out, where others couldn't, the subtle shifts in his poetry. With guarded irritation he protests, "But I don't like any

labels because I am not doing one thing all the time; it may look very much like one thing, just as it seems to be entirely without ideas, which, from my point of view, is ridiculous."

But while the letters and diaries reveal Stevens' views on art, poetry and other serious topics, they also show his vigorous attitude toward life itself. "Ambition and energy," he declares, "keep a man young. Oh treasure! Philosophy, non-resistance, 'sweetness and light' leave a man pitifully crippled and aged though pure withal." Often there is the devilish gleam, the charming irony pervading what he writes. He notes in his Journal:

Stopped at every tavern for a beer and a poke at the bartenders . . . thought it rather good fun to ask them about Mike Angelo, Butch Petrarch, Sammy Dante. We asked one fellow whether he had heard that John Keats had been run over by a trolley car at Stoney Creek in the morning. He said that he had not — he did not know Keats — but that he had heard of the family. Spirit of Adonais!

Later, he appeals to his publishers, "May I ask you to correct the proof of the title? It should be *Travelers*. The printer appears to believe that travelers are full of l, so that he makes it travellers." And, in a letter to his wife, he observes, "The trip . . . was uninteresting . . . only a succession of farms and railroad villages interspersed with advertisements of Beech Nut Bacon and Climax Plug, the Grand Old Chew. I am not keen about either of these articles. . . . *Water the plants*." Aiming his satire at the weather, Stevens writes,

It has been raining for a month. We have become so accustomed to it that a fair day is irritating. . . . The other night I looked out the window and was horrified to find there a full moon shining in the cloudless sky, but thank God that didn't last long. I was positively dizzy with apprehension when I lay down, and yet, before dawn the dear old mist was around me once again and I realized how able-bodied my guardian angel really is.

Not only could Stevens pinpoint the humor of general situations; he could prick his own image just as easily. Early in his career, having won \$100. for a one act play, he informs his wife:

St. Paul, Minn., July 19, 1916, Wallace Stevens, the playwright and barrister, arrived at Union Station, at 10:30 o'clock this morn-

ing. Some thirty representatives of the press were not present to greet him. . . . At the Club, Mr. Stevens took a shower-bath and succeeded in flooding not only the bath-room floor but the bed-room floor as well. He used all the bath towels in mopping up the mess and was obliged to dry himself with a wash cloth.

Years later he reveals, in the same self-mocking tone:

After three cocktails I asked them if they had ever heard the story of the man who etc., etc., etc. After making sure that they all wanted to hear it, I told it. It is the funniest story in the world, but, curiously, I was the only person that really laughed and I have been worried to death ever since, that is to say, until recently, when I said the hell with it.

Thus Wallace Stevens, an individual of many moods and interests, a practical businessman and an idealistic poet, caught both the profound and light moments of existence with a perfect twist of language. Even in his seventies, Stevens shows his enthusiasm and insight when he declares,

Of course I have had a happy and well kept life. But I have not even begun to touch the spheres within spheres that might have been possible if, instead of devoting the principal amount of my time to making a living, I had devoted it to thought and poetry. . . . But, then . . . to be cheerful about it, I am now in the happy position of being able to say that I don't know what would have happened if I had had more time. This is very much better than to have had all the time in the world and have found oneself inadequate.

But despite his poems, diaries and letters, Wallace Stevens remains, to a great extent, a mystery. He manages, as he tried, to keep part of himself to himself alone; and he achieves this personal and poetic "obscurity" mainly in his very choice of an ego-centered aesthetic framework of operation. By so limiting his context, Stevens encounters many conflicts which he cannot resolve. Moreover, by writing from such a personal standpoint, he presents many resolutions which others cannot grasp. And so, perhaps, Wallace Stevens can be best seen by paraphrasing his own lines. Stevens observes in "Thirteen Ways of Looking At A Blackbird":

A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.

So too, one can say of Wallace Stevens,

"A man and a man/Are one./A man and a man and a man/Are one."

Home

MARY MOSS, '70



Illustration by Cheryl Babineau, '67

The priest handed me my diploma and said "Congratulations." I changed from my long white dress into the suit I would wear home. We picked up my trunk and suitcases and packed them into the car. It was hot. I said good-bye to the boy I had considered marrying. Then I went home. It was hot and school was over.

Seated in the back of the Dodge, I watched the houses go by. For three months I would dwell in a house people said was my home. I wondered what it would be like.

During the unloading of what my mother called "your junk," I caught a glimpse of my home. It was a six-room apartment. Most of the shades were drawn in an attempt to keep out the sun. It was hot. Then we went out to eat.

As we sat in the restaurant, I studied the other occupants of my home — my grandmother, my mother, my sister. We were all tired. Weariness showed most on my grandmother's face. Age does that, I suppose. My grandmother is German. She speaks English with an accent. That day the accent was particularly strong. She'd lapse into German often. My mother was vexed with the waitress for bringing the wrong potato — french fries instead of baked — and annoyed at my sister for implying that perhaps the waitress was tired. My sister sat there as still as a beautiful butterfly with its wings cut off.

We went home. By that time dusk had come. It was still hot. I turned on the phonograph and played the recording of "Summertime" from *Porgy and Bess*. I made my bed. My grandmother and mother were quarreling — they always do. My grandmother was saying that I shouldn't start work the next day. It was too hot and I was tired. My mother retorted that she wasn't going to pay my college expenses and she wouldn't

have me staying home all summer doing nothing. . . . "Summertime, and the living is easy. . . ."

My sister came up. We sat and listened. My mother won the argument — she always does. I played the record again. After a while, Charlie and I started to talk. I asked her what it had been like the past week — she had gotten out of school a week before I did. "Hot," was all she answered.

Charlie is beautiful — the tall model type, yet not too skinny. She's been tied to my mother's apron strings for so long I doubt if she'll ever break free. She worries me. She could really be somebody. She's got understanding. And patience. Not many people are like that any more.

I waited for the record to finish — "Hush, little baby, don't you cry." Charlie and I undressed and went to bed. I thought that life would be wonderful if everyone had a fairy godmother to make things right. I thought of what I'd wish for if suddenly I had three wishes. I decided happiness would be the first. Happiness for me and Charlie, my mother and grandmother. But then I knew that only death could bring perfect happiness. That bothered me so I went on to my second wish — a son. A son I could raise the way I wanted to, who would speak fluent German — not the broken German of my grandmother, a son who would take piano lessons and dancing lessons, to whom I could read and read. . . .

My mother hollered for me to unpack. She didn't want all my junk lying about. Charlie said I'd better go and get it over with. She helped me sort my clothes, books, and the other stuff and put them away. About two hours later, Charlie and I climbed into bed again. I never did think of the third wish. It was still hot.

Access

*some tall
and shining Christ
may come
epiphanied
in light
and instantly appear
and dawn our day
with searing power
while we stand
gawking
squinting
myopic'd by our fear
or might
come instead
unheralded
and far less clear
or may already
(in not quite gold)
be
here*

SISTER MARY DAVID, S.N.D., '68

The 365th Day in the Life of the Man of the Oar

MAUREEN CRIGHTON, '67

One blast more and he was unsteadied forever. Around him every object was indistinguishable from the next. The road assumed the boredom of the sea which he had left. There was no surprise, not even a necessary amount of fear remaining in his life at sea. Now, though, he wished that he were open-sailed and propelled by a hurricane from port to port. This walking — in dirty visibility — was wearing him out. He wanted to abandon the track he was walking on because it began to go up hill. At least at sea the hills subsided underneath the ship. If, of course, the ship rode them properly. If not, of course, there was the possibility of destruction. On land there was only the effort and then the top of the hill. Unless the hill ended in a cliff which dropped, suddenly and finally, down into a murky unconsciousness from which he could revive and continue, mindful always of unexpected developments. He relaxed at this thought. Then unrelaxed, thinking that this line of thought dulled his adventure. It was better not to have the words for an experience until after he had gone through it.

Then new ideas began to invade his private mind. Yes, that was another thing that Facius had discovered about himself. He had a private mind and a public one; he was forever getting them confused unless he

had a secret with one that the other could not reveal under dread of losing his private mind to silence and oblivion. His private mind he called John Henry. It kept the public one busy qualifying appraisals of life. How busy it all was. But he liked to keep things neat for himself while he was able. So often, he scattered. No matter what his methods of prevention were, he still confused himself unbearably. And sometimes he was forced to divide the divisions he made. Unending. Whenever he thought unending, it startled his private mind. Everyone must have some means of temporary annihilation. He wished that he could have a bit of a cocoon to get himself out of the dust storm whirling outside. Given enough time in the cocoon, he would unstick himself and crawl out long enough to note whether the day was balmy enough for his taste. But of course, things like that don't happen to humans. That was what startled his private mind. Facius could be so unnatural! A thought like that was not even worth a war with the sailor. He ousted the idea of comfort from his thoughts and again was ready to climb the hill in order to further his secret. Or, he hoped, to bring it to the end.

His secret had caused much consternation. And it was such a simple one to make outside so riotous. Although he felt guilty

about disturbing his fellow sailors and the captain, there was an element of pleasure (not sadistic he told himself) in getting everyone else's thoughts in a state of clutter. He closed his mind to get an image of the ship on the day he decided to leave. Before he could begin the outlines for his images, he made the marvelous discovery that, with his eyes shut, walking uphill felt precisely the same as walking on a level. He quickly abandoned this pleasant notion and disciplined himself back to the image of the ship's company.

First his friend the bosun, who had too much world-shyness to come with Facius, sat cross-legged and unquestioning on the deck. He was sanding an oar so that he could later apply the finest of varnishes and shellacs. It was that same oar which Facius loyally carried on his shoulder. The bosun was Facius' friend and was not inordinately curious. Before he could cement the bosun to the image, the old fellow flooded out of the picture — washed away by a mob of ordinary seamen. Facius saw that his friend had not completely left the picture and yelled to him: "Use the oar, man. Paddle back." It was nice to keep friends in the scene, especially when all the other actors were boisterous and threatening. The bosun, feeling that he was needed, began to work the oar. It was useless. He kept going round in circles until he was at the bottom of the whirlpool. The sea calmed itself and closed over him. That's when the mob of ordinary seamen began to hover about Facius. He had his resignation from the ship's company in his hands. Owl, never very alert, blinked with special slowness at the ship's doctor. And Doctor Yak nodded slowly and spoke quietly in between long, momentous drags on his pipe. He slept eventually, before he could deliver his full speech. (The doctor, much of the same kidney as the horse, could sleep standing up). What Facius was doing, said the doctor, something like this, was the same as tearing the heart and lungs out of a man without a medical certificate. Why — a thirty-year man, the blood and guts of the navy — without Facius the ship would come on hard times. Facius had blurted out,

"But Doctor — thirty years aboard and I'm still peeling potatoes and swabbing decks." "Really," the doctor said, "Really. Hmmm. Well, anyhow, every man in his place and every cog in the wheel makes for smooth functioning." None of their conversation mattered to the ship's company. They were trying to discover why Facius wanted to leave, and furthermore, what survival techniques he would carry with him to ward off the foray of unknown lands. So they spied on him night and day. Some asked directly: "What are your plans?" They did not believe in unformed preparation. What bothered Facius though, was the variety of un-directness with which they peered into his privacy.

The Captain squeezed down into the image from his cabin on the upper deck. The seamen disappeared as the Captain brought with him fog and sea mist. It surrounded his head and his face could not be seen. Facius remembered only gold buttons, gold frog and gold teeth. From the gold came a voice — "Why?" And Facius answering all the gold: "Can you tell me apart from the other seamen?" The captain was saying, "Do you think you'll get your individuality only by walking on land with an oar on your shoulder? Do you think, ever? Do you think a man wins his peace by arbitrary measures?"

Facius was about to tell the Captain the rest of his small secret. Then decided not to and asked him: "How do you know that you are human?" The Captain was angry, the sea-mist opened to show a snarling mouth scolding, "Sailor — you're way off course."

Facius did not have to stop; he had no use for navigating the Captain anymore. "How?" And the captain knew that he was in charge and had to answer, "Don't I give roses to my love? Don't I sing and make songs like a minstrel? Don't I chase peacocks and crusade against pestilence?" . . . Facius was quickly trying to assemble these impressions into a face as the Captain continued to list his accomplishments. He tried to give him a countenance that could not be obscured by mist. The Captain, he was fixing the image

now, had roses for lips, a sword for a nose (which swung dangerously like a cycled pendulum), feathers for his hair, a broken G-string for his eyebrows, diamond eyes and caverns beyond the eyes where there were more diamonds. Everything was starting to become solid for Facius. He was on the verge of an important discovery about the Captain when he rolled down-hill. Moss to moss, gathering no stones. The wind was at his back and he was now open-sailed. Now that he didn't want it anymore. At the bottom of the hill he sprawled — face down, feeling that his length spanned and gave pain across continents. He forgot everything before his fall and got up, dazed and frightened. He had spent such a large amount of time and energy gathering his concentration for a whopping conclusion. He had failed. Again. Everything not only dipped crazily into the uncharted areas of his consciousness but into places for which he had no divisions or compartments. Then everything seemed to spill outside of his head and was taken up by the wind. So what? So now he would be content to become full and then emptied, never saving a grain. That thought was no help; although he liked its kind sentiment. He gathered himself together. Facius was bruised. He wondered. Then worried. He felt about in his pocket. Yes, thank God, for that anyhow. He had not broken his clam.

Further on he saw the outlines of a building. He assembled his belongings — quickly — before the winds could claim them. The dust whipped into his face and lodged in his wounds. He cried out in a place that had no echoes because his alone voice would not let itself be heard very far.

"Could you offer me some brief containment?" While he was choking this through the dust that whirled and settled dry in his throat, the tavern-keeper responded by swinging the door open a passing length. The traveller's slim diet left room for him to squeeze through. The oar he carried was another matter and it bumped against the door.

"You've chipped my new paint."

The tavern-keeper must have been angry

because he shoved Facius back into the storm. Facius was time-weary and not about to be tyrannized. There was a time when he enjoyed learning from tyrants. He watched the earth storm, the eddies of dust blown furiously across a still earth by the wind. Nothing could be seen in the distance and the



*Illustration by
Julie Geoghegan, '67*

air was all earth. For a moment Facius longed for the gallons of sea-storm that woke his every sense with their tang. But the dust — he might become accustomed to its ounce of pressure.

He banged the oar down insistently on the steps of the tavern. Through no real intent to harm or irritate, he had splintered their wood. He was afraid that the tavern-keeper would never admit him. So, he surveyed the door. It was barred from the inside. As a result he could not easily enter. He was trying to be fair. Perhaps he would have done the same thing if he were a tavern-owner, familiar with the dangers and tribulations that determine barred doors. The only way in was by request. It *had* to look suspicious if he entered through a window. Besides — There were probably too few people inside at this time of day for him to remain anonymous.

"Let me in! Your paint is blistered and would have peeled of its own accord." He waited. This was not immediately satisfactory. He began to worry as his resource of various approaches was quickly emptying. If necessary, he thought, I'll develop some ingenuity. This tavern-keeper was a peculiar fellow. Other people generally accepted his second or, at least, his third alternative, when he was prepared to offer a more distant range. He knew his range might lead others to diffusion; a diffusion that he, himself, found incomprehensible and detrimental to ordering any sort of practical existence. He modified and risked the third alternative. "Let me in. I'll repaint the door."

He heard an uncertain movement inside and a hesitant rattling of the latch. Facius waited to see if he would be forced to offer more or content them with less. He did not object to either direction. The latch inside grew quiet and he tried the door gently to see if it would give. But the lock was as stubborn as its keeper. "I'll bring you an iron door to replace this."

The door swung so fully that it almost left the hinges. "You know don't you," stated the rough-bearded tavern-keeper, "that I'm a Christian, given time enough. I'm glad you didn't leave, I had decided to open the door.

It was outside of your province."

"How could I know?" Facius was only glad that he did not have to resort to threat. He would refrain from it now, even though the tavern-keeper had taken away his feeling of control over the situation. Facius stepped inside and closed the door to the wind. He rested on his oar. Then, with his feet placed square on the deck, swung his body in an arc, examining the particulars of the tavern. It was uninteresting for the moment. His own skin was covered with uncomfortable dust which the journey had layered upon him. He saw, as he brushed the mud which had been clinging to his boots for an immense portion of the journey, that it dropped to the floor like so many small shells. His hands too were scaled with dirt. The tavern-keeper was hovering near him and Facius noticed that his long silence since entering was making the tavern-keeper nervous.

"Where can I wash?" Facius' request crashed into the amusement of the entire company. For the first time Facius was conscious of how many people were there. They laughed unnecessarily.

"There is no water," finished the tavern-keeper, letting him in on the joke. "We've plenty of ale, though, to keep your insides free from dust." His gaze lost its offhand manner as he made an issue of Facius' oar. He attracted attention to it by pointing and saying insistently: "First, you must check your gun."

Facius groaned at this remark. It was unhappily typical, sadly uninventive. "Look for yourself and see if it is loaded." He gave his oar to the tavern-keeper, who took it into his hands with a great deal of care and self-importance. He aimed it at a harmless window. He sought the trigger which was not there and pulled it. Nothing happened.

"With or without gunpowder it is dangerous. Set it aside."

Facius was perturbed. He told the tavern-keeper, with all the surliness he could muster, that he promised to check it. After. After a trial of strength. If the tavern-keeper or any of his company were able to separate him from his gun, then he would relinquish with

grace. Before the tavern-keeper had given the proposition an adequate amount of thought, there was a banging on the door. Facius went himself to admit the newcomer. He felt some acquaintance now with the manners of the tavern and also wanted to make sure that the newcomer was admitted easily. But his friend the tavern-keeper begrudged him the opportunity of greeting the new arrival. Without difficulty the door opened to admit a gnarled old man. He was exceedingly complicated in his appearance and looked as if he bent with the demands of every contrary wind. The sawdust on the floor submitted to his foot. Behind him, cautiously, trailed a fiddle-bearer who was anchored to the old man by a length of rope. He untied the young girl once he was inside and she sat down under the shade of the bar with the fiddle in her lap. She softly plucked a tune from the instrument.

"I've come to play a duet with you. I saw you passing by a few minutes ago with your banjo." He examined the oar in Facius' hands, and looked very disappointed. "What good is a banjo without strings, without a hollow? You've but half of what you need for a song."

"But more than I ever thought of having." Facius became insolent; he hated criticism — especially unwarranted criticism.

"Why didn't you tell me it was a banjo?" interrupted the tavern-keeper. He was feeling like a terrible, meddling fool. "I see it all now. I'm sorry." As if to compensate, he brought Facius some ale.

When Facius had finished off the tankard, the tavern-keeper refilled it. The old man, disappointed with Facius, left his side to play cards with some cronies. Facius did not take this as a sign of abandonment because the old man kept looking in his direction, hoping, perhaps, that he would miraculously pull some banjo strings out of his pocket. And, really, the old man's expectancy made Facius discontented with himself. He wished he were able to turn his oar into a banjo and spark up the tavern. Life was there — without the music, though. Some incident might surge it along. How to create the momentum? He hadn't the practice nor the

talent for that. He rummaged around in his bag for some strings, finding only a starfish, and a clam shell. They were too young yet to be fossilized into the pebbles and rocks that had collected themselves in the sack. After all, he thought, what does it take but time and pressure to impose life on a stone — much to the detriment of the life embalmed there. What if the life had said to time that it was not ready? Then time has it in itself to wait. And the rock — certainly that was in no hurry. "Nonsense, Facius," he yelled out loud. "Stop the non-essentials." And he became at one with himself about the nature of his argument. He forbade any further division. For the moment he disregarded the presence of the stones and diverted himself with the existence of the starfish and the clam. What use, after all, was a man to make of these possessions? How could he give them a value at the moment and, at the same time, wish to discard them from his heavy sack. A man must travel lightly. Or in heaviness settle down — with no buoyancy.

He took the starfish and the clam shell in hand and knelt with them reverently beside the fiddle-bearer. He made a silent speech. "Take these for your constant attendants. They are a gift from Neptune after my seventh crossing of the equator. They can serve you as you will — provided that your will is generous to their nature." He looked to the girl's eyes for some response, but they were averted. Undiscouraged by her shyness, he continued. "You will find that they are quiet; they have been washed over for a billion years. But their vintage earns them this privilege. Don't set them an arduous task; it will not be accomplished in your lifetime — nor in your children's. Do you understand the slowness of all free gifts?"

Her eyes now stared back at him but she took his offerings in her hands for a closer examination. It was then that her grandfather looked back at Facius to see if he had produced the strings. He screamed violently through his whiskers, "Leave the child alone! She's deaf, anyway." The girl started, in spite of her unhearing. She walked to the fireplace, and burned the starfish and the clam.

"No better end for them." Facius said

this publicly because John Henry, at the time, was insisting on resiliency. He drank a toast to the fiddle-bearer. She returned to her place and began to play a lively song. Facius wanted to cross anchors with the child again, so he jumped to a dance faster than her tune. She adjusted quickly to the motions of his feet and went ahead. And he quickened, now desperate, to keep up. His oar was on his shoulder and it threw him off balance and kept him from exhibiting his natural grace. He placed it on his head. It served a mean rudder there. So he abandoned it to the table nearby. No sooner had he forsaken the oar than the child ran out and seized it. An alarm rang shrill as a bosun's whistle. Of all the things he possessed he would not consider giving this one up. It pleased this child too much. He seized her fiddle and held it extended it toward her, while motioning the child to return his oar. In her sullen way, she defied him. He saw, unhappily, that the people in the tavern were aligned with his competitor.

She walked to the fireplace and consigned the oar to the blaze. Facius watched. Watched — dazzled now by the simplicity of the matter, the unprovoking ease of it all. For she burned his hoped-for prison that he'd carried with him from the sea, without seeming to think it important, without knowing that the oar was making his one decision. He'd grown bored with the sea and promised one day, amused with his freedom to promise, that he would walk inland as far as he could until someone asked him what he had on his shoulder. He had been walking a year or more and had come to the point where the sea was far behind — but close in front of him. Even by walking backwards he could not increase the distance or make it more inland. No one had ever asked. Everyone assumed they knew what he held on his shoulder, or ran away because they thought he was crazy, or didn't have the courtesy to ask. For him it was simple. One question would finish his wandering: "What is that on your shoulder?" Then he would bury his oar, draw a circle around it and never again step outside. An end to wandering. A peace that

was his. It was all in ashes now, for the moment.

"Where is the exit?" asked Facius. "I do not like to leave the same way as I entered."

"There is none — as yet." With that, the tavern-keeper disappeared into the back room with a few of the men playing cards. Facius wondered what they were planning. He of course knew that it had nothing to do with him. It was unfortunate that everyone in this place also knew what he carried on his shoulder. Or rather, that they misnamed it constantly. He was anxious to settle.

In a few minutes the tavern-keeper returned with a saw, a pencil, a leveler and a drill, a few hinges and some bolts. Cautiously he measured out a tall wide arch, marking a door on the wall. They sawed until the filling dropped to the floor, put hinges on it and a knob, then fastened it on properly.

Each one was busy at his work. All were singing happily and the tavern hummed a tune Facius had never heard. Maybe he did have a talent. But, he thought, God really couldn't have been terribly serious when he created a Facius and set him roaming. Submissively, he picked up his fiddle and tried to match their song. The fiddle — he was not accustomed to it — responded poorly. But it only added to the amusement of everyone, so he continued. He found that he actually liked this as well as the oar. While he was playing, he walked over to the master carpenter who was carving pictures on the door. He saw Aeolus calming the winds, Neptune commanding the sea, and — a fiddle-bearer burning an oar.

"Finished," cried the tavern's artist as he swept up the wood shavings.

Facius put the fiddle on his shoulder and walked out the door. Outside were three men with oars waiting to come in. "What's that on your shoulders?"

"Oars," they replied happily, in one voice.

One of the men stepped out of line and peered at the fiddle. "Oh!" He laughed at his own perception. "I didn't recognize this at first — without the dinghy."

SAND

*Ocean-cooled, deep-furrowed and
swirling, curling
around,
down —
then
chewed bright-basted.
taut-tuckt sprink'ets — ignited
flashing, blinding
Me,
sweat
lapt —
pursued july-stranded —
sea spurls up up
relieving
me on swift-swept sand.*

SALLYANN GIACOSANZIO, '70





Illustration by Gerry Graham, '67

Claiming that a tendency to attack members of one's own species is instinctive, Konrad Lorenz has provided a descriptive analysis of intra-specific aggression throughout the animal kingdom. *On Aggression* is written with a delightful sense of humor and a constant awareness that the basic shapers of the animal world are at work shaping man, too, in his evolution.

This urge to fight one's own kind is seen dramatically in poster-colored coral fish. Although he exists peacefully in a tank with other types of fish, the coral fish will violently attack anyone of his own species-coloring who dares to encroach upon his territory.

This apparently destructive aggression has several purposes, according to Lorenz. First, it insures that the species will be spread out over the greatest possible area. The fighting urge is strongest at the center, the home or nest, of an animal's territory, and gradually declines to a fleeing urge as he approaches the territorial border of another. Moreover, intra-specific aggression provides for the selection of the strongest by rival sexual contests. Unfortunately, this selection may come to rest on a basis not related to survival in the environment. Lorenz quotes his teacher, Oskar Heinroth, as saying, "Next to the wings of the Argus pheasant, the hectic life of Western civilized man is the most stupid product of intra-specific aggression." The fighting instinct also functions in defense of the young.

Less obviously and more significantly, intra-specific aggression plays a role in "motivation" and in controlling the development of the species. In many animals, aggression

is structured into a "pecking order," an authority accorded to age and experience rather than to physical strength. This rank accorded to knowledge for its function in the community is quite evident in a baboon troop and reaches a high point in mankind whose evolution continues with increasing emphasis on learning capacity and level of education.

Lorenz also makes use of the concept of "phylogenetic ritualization." A chain of activity serving one purpose comes to be passed on by heredity, is eventually engaged in for its own sake, and becomes part of the peculiar communication pattern of a certain pseudo-sub-species. Culture is the analogy in man. The sense of group distinction which this fosters, Lorenz believes, must be overcome if we are to grow together in the modern world.

More than mere means of identifying oneself as a member of the sub-group, these mechanisms function as a biological "morality." In general, the effectiveness of the weapons of any species corresponds to the strength of the inhibitions which have been developed to prevent intra-specific attack. For this purpose "appeasing rites" are developed. These rites, such as a dog offering the vulnerable back of his neck to another, divert the aggression of one individual from another equally particular individual, and redirect it to other members of the species in general. This leads to the formation of a very important "bond." For the first time individual relationships are recognized as significant; aggression paradoxically provides the basis of personal friendship and love.

With the firm belief that "only the person who knows animals, including the highest and most nearly related to ourselves, and who has gained insight into evolution, will be able to apprehend the unique position of man," Lorenz attempts an analysis of the modern human situation. Within the framework of intra-specific aggression and the principles of ritualization he sees certain dangers.

Paramount is the problem that, unlike most animals, our repressive mechanisms have not kept pace with our weapons. Pulling a trigger involves none of the physical closeness that would make body-to-body attack normally repulsive to us. A second danger is that at a critical age a generation will suffer from the failure of elders to pass on human ritualization. According to Lorenz, there is a distinct sensitive period for "object fixation" when a young man becomes committed to whatever he will live and die for. Our best hope for handling aggression today is to turn the militant enthusiasm which this object fixation generates into "genuine causes that are worth serving in the modern world."

In his stirring "Avowal of Optimism" the author proclaims his hopes for civilization: growing humor, to laugh at phoniness and fraud; and growing knowledge, to bring man an understanding of his place in evolution, his greatness and responsibility. But Konrad Lorenz has "a third, more distant hope based on the possibilities of evolution." Personal love and friendship are too limited if they prevent aggression between friends only to allow national and ideological hostilities. "The obvious conclusion is that love and friendship should embrace all humanity, that we should love all our human brothers indiscriminately." This is the avowal of optimism: "I believe that reason can and will exert a selection pressure in the right direction. I believe that this, in the not too distant future, will endow our descendants with the faculty of fulfilling the greatest and most beautiful of all commandments."

A book *On Aggression* might be expected to be radically opposed to the thought of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who writes of the evolution of *love*. But there are deep

underlying similarities in the schemes Lorenz and Teilhard delineate. Teilhard's writings can be seen as an expansion of Lorenz's "avowal of optimism" into a Christian evolutionary plan, a beautiful exposition of where we have come from and what we are evolving into. Lorenz, read in conjunction with Teilhard, adds an insight into the actual biological mechanisms of this evolution.

In an exposition of the sweeping evolutionary plan which Lorenz only hints at, Teilhard sketches a purposeful ascent of the universe to consciousness through the stages of Cosmogogenesis, Biogenesis, Anthropogenesis, Noogenesis, and Christogenesis. The first is the generation of matter, the primeval hydrogen mass. The next step, Biogenesis, is the advent of plant and animal life. It is evident that consciousness and the capacity for growth increase in the leap from a piece of quartz to a plant. Animals, moreover, possess sensation and a greater ability to act upon their environment. With man, Anthropogenesis, creation's growing consciousness of itself, bursts out in thought, giving rise to Noogenesis. Evolution is no longer primarily in physical forms, but in man's spirit and consciousness. According to Teilhard, we are approaching the point at which we will have the knowledge and freedom necessary to shape our environment, ourselves, and the course of evolution.

Man, like many other species of animals, is reaching a stage of "socialization" according to Teilhard, when the members join together in a common organization. However, the outsider has been, and is now, defined subtly as non-human, non-us, due to the sub-cultural ritualization patterns of which Lorenz writes. Teilhard agrees with Lorenz in believing that the walls must come down. It is only in a unity of love that man can continue to evolve in the right direction, toward the true adulthood of mankind as a race.

This is the note on which Lorenz ends, the note which Teilhard sings into Christ. The universe is growing into Christ, Who is the very force of its evolution. In *The Future of Man* Teilhard writes, "We underestimate the powers of growth with which Christ endowed the Church. . . . From the depths of matter

to the highest peak of the Spirit there is one evolution." Christ is the Alpha, the intimate evolutionary urge, and the Omega, the infinite hyper-person toward which all is being drawn.

Christianity is in its deepest meaning a religion of incarnation. Christ is *carnus* and God. Christians share Christ's mission, "to restore all things." This means working with and freeing creation to become truly modelled on Christ; it, too, must be *carnus* united in some way with God.

Both Teilhard and Lorenz are concerned with the role education plays in shaping our realization of this mission. Lorenz's comment on "object fixation" underlines the urgency in Teilhard's insistence on the value of Christian education in *The Future of Man*. Moreover, education in man has become his "additive dimension," a concept akin to Lorenz's phylogenetic ritualization. Christianity is what gives this dimension a soul.

Going beyond Lorenz's hope that man will evolve in the right direction, Teilhard discusses the response he feels we must make to actively shape this evolution of the world

into Christ, Christogenesis. The response is not one of pessimism, implying physical or spiritual suicide. Nor is it an incomplete optimism which denies the value of matter in a search for purely spiritual experience. It is neither Ayn Rand capitalism nor individual-stunting totalitarianism. The true Christian response is optimistic, faithful to the earth, in a *loving community*. This "psychic grouping" has as its function "personalization," to "increase the variety of choice and wealth of spontaneity" by loving each member into releasing his own full energy of freedom, consciousness and love.

Like Lorenz, Teilhard claims that personal love is not enough. It must be "totalised" to result in a love of the entire universe. In committing ourselves to this last response, the best of Lorenz's "genuine causes that are worth serving in the modern world," Teilhard believes we respond fully to our humanity and to life. He cries out in *Building the Earth*, "Down with the cowards and the sceptics, the pessimists and the unhappy, the weary and the stagnant. . . . the function of man is to build and direct the whole of the earth."

BARBARA DECK, '69

*"And you, O my soul, where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless
oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing,
seeking the spheres to connect things."*

WALT WHITMAN

Dream

*Building a dream
is a delicate scheme
a spindly rib
of a butterfly wing
flying wildly in thirst of spring —
is strong
 is long
is short
 is tall
everything, everything
nothing at all
the breath of a Buddha
the bite of fall
everything, everything
nothing at all.*

PATRICIA MAHER, '68

